

AN OLD FRIEND

WITH

A NEW FACE:

A NOVEL.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY MRS. PARSONS.

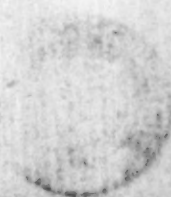
VOL. II.

"The wicked are joined together by a brittle chain, and when it snaps, they hold each other in too much contempt and abhorrence, ever to be re-united."—

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1797.



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WHILE Madame Bruyere was thus endeavouring to reconcile her mind, and to determine on a conduct so exemplary and proper, according with the promises that had been drawn from her; the transported Marquis was triumphing in his success with Monsieur Le Grand, not without some harsh reflections on her obstinate resistance, which “he should remember at a proper time hereafter.”

She attended the summons to dinner; she assumed an air of sober cheerfulness, a placidity of countenance, but her eyes were red and swelled with weeping, her voice was hurried and tremulous—all passed unnoticed; the Marquis could not restrain the vivacity, the joy that overpowered him; every look and action spoke

his happiness; he animated the whole company; his two friends seemed to partake in his joyful emotions, and the fair cause of them could not be quite insensible to the happiness she had given birth to.

From that day the Marquis incessantly importuned Madame Bruyère to complete her generous promise, and at length he obtained her permission to name the day—she only requested every thing might be private, and that she might not be expected to receive company for a month or two.

Her wishes were a law; he read to her a long parchment of a settlement on her, and a handsome sum secured to each of her children, supposing he might have a family of his own; in failure of *that*, Henry and Henrietta were heirs to all his possessions.

This great and unexampled generosity subdued the spirit of Madame Bruyère; she felt all she could do would be little to show her gratitude, unless she gave him her heart; and it was not her fault if he did



did not entirely possess it, for she laboured incessantly to teach that refractory heart a new lesson, and to give it a new tenant.

The marriage ceremony was performed without pomp or éclat, at her request, the two friends only present; the Countess had been some time reinstated in her esteem; and having once given her consent and approbation to the Marquis, she pardoned in Monsieur Le Grand that excess of zeal for his happiness, which had led him into the display of such improper sentiments as she thought inconsistent with a man of honour.

Her children, very fond of the Marquis, were delighted with their new papa, who returned their tenderness by every indulgence they could wish for. Honest Philip (before whom his mistress blushed when first the intended marriage was announced) was too much attached to her and the children, not to rejoice in an establishment that restored them to honour and affluence; and his honoured mistress made him a very handsome present on her

nuptials, which at first he declined, but when urged by her with some warmth to accept a token of her regard—"Well, Madame, if I must obey you, it will only add to my little flock to be returned into its proper channel."

A fortnight flew away winged with pleasure, rapture, and gratitude; at the expiration of that time Monsieur Le Grand took his leave, the Countess still remained, but the Marchioness, as we must now call Madame Bruyere, was frequently surprised and disgusted at the growing freedom of her manners: the Marquis too seemed to have undergone a transformation, not at all to his advantage in her eyes.

That delicate, respectful air of tenderness that first engaged her esteem, was changed into a lively, rattling loquacity, not always consistent with decorum. That state of indifferent health almost instantaneously gave way to vigour and spirits; and as she had not vanity enough to believe her charms were so powerful as to
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produce such wonderful effects in so short a time, a suspicion of duplicity sometimes floated on her mind, and gave her some secret pangs.

From the moment she became his wife, she endeavoured to suppress all sorrow and unavailing regrets ; duty and gratitude influenced every look and action ; and if she could not feel that tenderness for the Marquis which possessed her whole soul for Monsieur Bruyere, at least he had nothing to complain of ; by every delicate attention she strove to promote his felicity, and prove her perfect esteem for him.

They had been married little more than two months, when one day, as they were chatting over the desert, the Marquis said, " My dear Louisa, is it not high time to take Henry from the hands of women ?" " I confess I think so," answered she, " though I shall regret my young pupil ; have you heard of a preceptor for him ?" " No, 'tis extremely difficult to meet with a proper one ; there is an excellent academy at Bensançon, and I think to send him

there without delay; therefore with you would give proper orders to let him be equipped as soon as possible for his removal."

Astonishment seized every faculty of this tender mother—"Good heaven!" said she, at last, "did you not tell me they should be educated by qualified persons under my own eye?" "I had some thoughts of it," answered he, "but the children have been so much accustomed to your indulgence, that I am persuaded you would be for retaining your pupils, and not resign them to the proper authority of others; therefore Henry shall go to Besançon, and Henrietta to an excellent convent at Salines, where you may now and then pay her a visit."

To have any idea of what the Marchioness suffered at this unexpected delivery of sentiments so opposite to his former ones, and so contrary to all her hopes, one must be one's self a mother, who had sacrificed every wish and inclination of her heart to prevent a separation from her children.

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Incapable of speaking for some moments, she fixed her eyes upon him so steadily, and with such expression in them, that callous as he was, and versed in the arts of duplicity, his conscious eye fell under her's; while he stammered out—"I can not see why you are so agitated, I have most certainly *their* interest at heart."—"It *may* be so," said she, with a deep sigh, "but *my happiness* is not consulted in the plan, nor is it such as I should have expected from you.—My beloved boy must have masters, and a proper education suitable to the independence you have generously given to him.—If it is your pleasure that *he* should go to an academy, I must submit to it; *I* have no rights beyond maternal claims; *you* are his guardian, his benefactor and father; however painful the stroke, I dispute not your authority over *him*.

"But, for heaven's sake," added she, tears bursting from her eyes, "do not think of depriving me of my Henrietta; I flatter myself I am sufficiently acquainted
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with the accomplishments and manners of the world to be *her* preceptress—permit me to gratify the tenderness of *my* heart, by informing that of my dear child, and save an unnecessary expence.”

“ I am sorry to refuse any request of your’s,” answered he, coldly, “ but I should ill observe the duties required of me in the sacred charge of those children, if I permitted them to be neglected in their education, through my complaisance to your fondness; which however laudable in some cases, would be very reprehensible here, and materially injure the objects of that fondness.”

“ O, my Lord,” cried she, “ when I wished to retire with my child into a convent, did you not peremptorily refuse her removal from you ?” “ Certainly,” he replied, “ and for the same reason that I now propose such a removal; I knew the mistaken tenderness of the mother would supersede the strictness of the governess; and that consigned solely to your care, the child would be indulged, but not instructed

structed with that strictness young people require to make them improve under their teachers."

"I flatter myself," returned she, eagerly, "that considering their tender age, my children are not deficient in such knowledge as is suited to their understandings; and, as their minds expand, of course studies will be adopted to their comprehension."

"If you wish to be in reality a good mother," said he, "attempt not to oppose plans calculated entirely for their advantage; I think *my* judgment and regard for them may be depended upon, and I have not *decided* on this head without proper reflection. I must hope therefore you will hasten the requisite preparations for their speedy departure."

The unfortunate lady rose from table, no longer able to support a further conversation on the subject, and unable to suppress the tide of sorrow that swelled her bosom almost to bursting. She withdrew to her apartment, and sinking into a chair,

for a few moments was scarcely sensible; recovering, and taking a glass of water, she was capable of recalling every word that had pierced her heart.

“Gracious God!” she exclaimed, “Is this the man who a few weeks since was dying for me, who lived but in my smiles, whose existence depended on my happiness, who would not oppose a wish when I was united to him? O, what have I done? How have I wronged the memory of the best of men? How constrained my own inclinations, and consented to a union most repugnant to my heart—and for what? To gratify a man, who now scruples not to distress and render me miserable!

“Part with my Henrietta! O, I will part with my life sooner—but I rave; he has power to *tear her* from me; he has a right to my *obedience*. Oh, Bruyere, dearest Bruyere! little did you think this friend and guardian would play the tyrant!”

In vain did this unhappy woman exhaust herself in fruitless lamentations, she could

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not avert the blow that awaited her; she saw in the cool, determined air of the Marquis, on pronouncing his last words, that the power she once had over him was in its decline; and that "violent, everlasting passion," which he had vowed for her, was like all other violent emotions, subsided into a calm indifference.

A woman who had been tenderly attached to him, would have discovered this growing coolness long before; for constancy was not a strong feature in *his* character; and distracted as he was for the possession of Madame Bruyere, he was nearly as much stimulated by the diabolical passions of hatred and ingratitude, to a man who had obliged him but too much; and by pride and resentment at the obstinate, peevish virtue of his wife, and the necessity of adopting such measures for his own gratification as gave him both trouble and delay.

To a man of this disposition, the consummation of his wishes was the grave of what he termed love; incapable of esteeming
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ing virtues to which he was himself a stranger, he knew not how to appreciate those of the woman he had married; and passion satisfied, she was more than indifferent to him, she was tiresome, insipid, and troublesome. The vile propensities which had lain dormant a few weeks, now took *their* lead, and claimed *their* share of gratification; freed from that painful restraint he had so long worn, he was eager to emancipate from the slavery of appearances, and follow the bent of his inclinations.

But it was not an easy matter to meet with an opportunity to insult his faultless lady, who made it a point strictly to perform every duty she had vowed; and if she was deficient in tenderness, she was most attentive to his wishes, and studious to oblige. He therefore could not quarrel with her, but her vulnerable side, he well knew, was her maternal affection; *there he could* wound her, and gratify his own pride, by assuming the authority to which he laid claim.

Such were the views, and such the disposition

position of this bad man; mean, artful, proud, and incapable of gratitude, he detested that man who had conferred the highest obligations on him, which he had not the soul to return, for not a generous sentiment was an inmate of *his* bosom; and finding he could not subdue the virtue of a woman who had inflamed him with love, he now hated her in proportion to the trouble and vexation she had given him.

The unhappy Marchioness, after passing some hours in the most pitiable condition, turning her eyes by chance to the window, saw him walking alone in the garden; urged by despair she resolved to make one effort more to obtain her wishes.

She hastened to join him, on seeing her he stopt; "I hope," said he, "you come to tell me of your ready acquiescence to my *determinations*, and are convinced of your own folly in shewing any reluctance to what must so essentially benefit your children." She was much shocked at this unpropitious opening; but gathering courage from necessity, she addressed him in
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the most soothing terms; gave him every credit for his kindness, but entreated him, by every endearing tie of love and compassion, to spare her the pangs of losing both children at once: if but for a few months, to wean her by degrees to his plan, she besought him not yet to send Henrietta from her.

He heard her with a steady countenance, then turning abruptly—"It would be well, Madame, if you were as anxious to prove your tenderness for a husband, by making no opposition to his designs, as you seem to be desirous of shewing your affection for your daughter—but I never form a resolution lightly, and therefore all further altercation is fruitless. If you love your husband, he might, I should suppose, console you for a temporary separation from other objects, however dear to you."—A malicious smile accompanied his last words, and he hastily walked from her to the house.

She tottered on to the nearest seat, which happened to be the arbour that had

had more than once been the scene of the most painful agitations. The moment she was seated, every occurrence struck forcibly on her memory—"O," cried she, "*here*, in this spot, he vowed everlasting love and gratitude; here I was prevailed upon, *compelled*, I may say, to give that fatal assent which has sealed my misery for ever! I have vowed to love and honour a man I can no longer look upon without horror, for he enjoys my distress. If any remembrance of my former reluctance stimulates him to revenge, what a mean soul must inhabit his bosom; and if he no longer loves me, what name can I give to a passion like his!

"I see," continued she, "my misery is now complete, and I deserve to suffer; I that had so recently lost the dearest, best of men; I ought to have died, to have sacrificed every thing, rather than weakly yield my hand to another! Just heaven! If I lose my children, how severely am I punished without daring to complain of my

my hard fate—Yet from *him* I deserved not this heart-wounding stroke.”

Lost in a whirl of painful reflections, she sat, regardless of time, till summoned to the saloon by a message from the Marquis; she obeyed the mandate, though very unfit to meet the eyes of the penetrating Countess. On entering it she saw the Marquis walking in great agitation; she sat down trembling, and not less agitated. He turned short towards her—“I am concerned, Madame, that I must add to the uneasiness you seem to feel; your insolent servant, Philip, has presumed to take such unwarrantable liberties in my house, that I am under the necessity of discharging him instantly; that you might have no cause to complain, I mention it to you previous to his leaving the castle.”

“Impossible!” cried she; “it is surely impossible, that my old and faithful servant would behave unbecoming the respect due to you.—I will see him, I will know his offence.” “Neither is necessary; ’tis sufficient that I am perfectly acquainted with
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with the nature of it, and as master in this house can both judge and punish."

"But, my Lord——" "Say no more, Madame; I am determined if you see him it shall be in my presence: but if you have the complaisance for me I have a right to expect, you will not *presume* to interrogate a servant I dismiss for ill behaviour to *me*; but be contented with the compliment I pay you, in telling you that he has offended me, and that I am going to reward him as his impertinence deserves."

"But why send for me, if I am not permitted to see him, to enquire what could provoke him to a fault so unpardonable?" "I chose to prevent an unnecessary display of those emotions you are so fond of exhibiting before the servants in waiting at supper, when disappointed of seeing *your favourite Philip*: you ought to thank me for the attention."

He left the room; his poor lady clasped her hands—"Surely I am in a dream!—What does all this mean?—What have I done,

done, to deserve the load of misery so unsparingly laid upon me this day !”

“ My dear lady,” said the Countess, advancing and taking her hand, “ do not give way to despair ; you mistake the character of the Marquis.” “ O yes, I have indeed mistaken it,” said she ; “ but *you*, Madame, *you* are in his confidence, tell me, I beseech you, why he has this day overwhelmed me with bitterness and sorrow ? How have I displeased him, why are my children to be suddenly torn from me, and what crime has my poor faithful servant committed, to deserve his disgraceful dismissal ? Alas, poor Philip ! I fear to investigate the cause even to myself.”

“ You give me more credit than I deserve,” said the Countess ; “ I am not *now* in the confidence of the Marquis, *your unbounded influence over him* leaves no room for other confidants ; all I can understand is, that he is anxious to make your children respectable and happy, and to *relieve you* from the fatigue of instructing them ; perhaps he is a little jealous of the

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the time you devote to them, but this is mere conjecture.

“Your servant, I hear, being informed by the gossiping of the Marquis’s man that the children were going from hence for their education, expressed *his* disapprobation in such terms as displeased the other; some words arose, and Philip very imprudently made use of several very improper reflections on the Marquis, and drew comparisons no ways becoming his station in the family. The servant irritated flew to his master, no doubt the story was aggravated, but it was impossible for the Marquis to act otherwise than he has done, consistent with his dignity and character.”

“But,” returned the Marchioness, “I owe the poor fellow some wages; a mistaken zeal for my happiness has urged him to this unlucky quarrel, but he ought not to lose the money due to him.” “I can say nothing to that,” replied the Countess. “Surely,” returned she, rising with some spirit, “in your presence, Madame, I may see

see him; you will witness for me, that no impropriety passes." Without waiting for an answer, she called to the servant that attended, and bid him send Philip to her.

In a moment he appeared, and fell on his knees at the door; with difficulty she suppressed her tears.—“ I was this instant turning my unwilling feet from the castle; thank Heaven I lingered: forgive me, Madame, forgive your poor servant, I meant no harm, I forgive them that wrong me, I never intended disrespect to any one.—And must I leave *you*, Madame?” asked he in a tone so touching, tears dropping on his face, that his lady could no longer repress her’s.

“ Indeed you *must*, Philip, I cannot protect those that offend the Marquis; I am grieved at your imprudence, but the Marquis has an undoubted right to discharge every servant that behaves improperly: I thank you for all your faithful services to *me*, and hope you will obtain a better situation.”

“ I shall never seek it,” answered he, fobbing;

fobbing; "but 'tis a consolation to me that my dear lady wishes me well."

"Here," said she, putting some money into his hand, and giving it a gentle pressure, "this is what I am indebted to you, I wish you well, and advise you to obey without delay the orders you have received," He would have declined the money, but she walked from him, and waved her hand for him to depart. At the door he again fell on his knees, invoking the blessings of Heaven and the Holy Virgin ever to attend his dearly beloved lady and her sweet children.

"You must forgive me, Madame," said she to the Countess, after he had shut the door, "if I cannot restrain my tears; this poor fellow has lived in the family from a child, he would not forsake his unhappy master when in affliction and distress, when he had no prospect of a single advantage to himself, but to share our poverty and misfortunes.—Poor Philip," added she, with a deep sigh, "thy imprudence has been fatal to us both!"

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“I really pity the man,” replied the Countess; “but his own indiscretion has brought this disagreeable business upon him, and therefore nothing can be pleaded in his behalf.” The Marchioness was silent; she strove to repress her sighs and regrets, convinced both were unavailing, and that now it must be her study to soothe rather than irritate the Lord of her destiny.

The Marquis returned some time after; his countenance was more serene, he spoke kindly to her, and said he expected company in a day or two, whose pleasant society he hoped would restore her spirits: she made a gentle reply. The evening passed off tolerably cheerful. They retired early, but no rest befriended the unhappy Marchioness; she recapitulated to herself the events of the day, she saw that her power was at an end, that love or esteem reigned not in the bosom of her husband, else could he persist in making her miserable by tearing her child from her, would he have disgracefully turned out of doors
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the old and faithful servant of her family; would he have doubted of her abilities to superintend the education of her daughter? Alas! thought she, every circumstance, his looks, his words, the very tone of his voice, convinces me that the ardent passion which has been the source of my misery, no longer exists.

She was right; and his fickle heart had been caught by a transient glance from the bright eyes of a poor notary's daughter at Salines, whom he had accidentally seen at a Bourgeois's assembly: this new passion had accelerated the line of conduct he had determined on, when love satisfied should give place to resentment, and other still less justifiable passions.

He wished to irritate and provoke her also, to get rid of the children, and gladly laid hold of a trifling expression poor Philip had used to dismiss a man she valued, and who he knew was faithful to her. The Countess entered into all his schemes that concerned the Marchioness, but she was unacquainted with this new
VOL. 11, B fancy;

fancy ; on the contrary, his excessive fondness, his extreme ardours in pursuit of Madame Bruyere, had recalled her first attachment to him, and she flattered herself that when those ardours cooled, she might again resume *her* power, and triumph over a woman whose goodness and virtue were a constant reproach to herself, and therefore an object of envy and hatred to a wicked mind.

While each of those worthless persons were planning their own devices, the unhappy mother had risen with the dawn of the morning to take her accustomed walk, and ruminate on her afflictions. Those walks of her's had been but too well observed always, and from thence all the different schemes of conversations in the shrubbery, the meetings, and the scrap of paper in the arbour, had been designedly laid to intrap her ; now, when no longer any point to carry, she was permitted to walk unmolested, and the Marquis could rest undisturbed.

She had strolled to the bottom of the garden,

garden, which had a small bridge over a rivulet that separated it from an adjoining copse; a gate at the end of the bridge prevented any entrance to the gardens, but to the inhabitants of the castle. She stood a few moments looking on the clear stream that flowed gently on, bright and sparkling from the rays of the rising sun: "Ah!" cried she, sighing, "such, so clear and unruffled passed the early season of my youth; no storms disturbed the deceitful calm, that promised pure and serene pleasures; I looked forward to years of happiness, nor dreamt of the tempest gathering at a distance to cloud in my best hopes for ever.—Presumptuous security! how greatly, how deservedly punished, when I dared to hope for *permanent felicity*!"

Lost in these distressing reveries, she remained silently contemplating the water, when she was suddenly alarmed by a voice repeating "Madame, Madame!" in a quick low tone. She raised her eyes, the sound came from the gate, she was startled, but, without advancing, she said aloud---

“ From whence proceeds that voice, who is it speaks ?” “ ’Tis I, ’tis your poor old Philip.” “ Ah !” cried she, hastily crossing the bridge, “ is it, indeed, *you*, Philip ?”

“ Yes, my lady, I knew you walked every morning, and hoped to find means to speak to you ; I have been watching since day-break ; I could discern you through the trees, but the underwood is so thick and interwoven towards the river, that I cannot make my way through, and I have much to say.” “ How unlucky,” returned she, “ that I have not the key of the gate ; but I will bring it with me to-morrow.” “ God send I may see you,” said he, “ meantime, Madame, be careful what you say to that Countess, she is your enemy.---I shall not leave this neighbourhood, and I have a friend in the castle : fear nothing, Madame, I will watch for your safety---Heaven preserve you from your enemies !”

“ Thank you, Philip,” replied she in a tremulous voice :---“ Adieu, remember to-

to-morrow." She quickly retreated, as she saw at a distance the servant who had the care of her children coming down the walk with them.

Agitated as she was, she hastened to meet them; little Henrietta flew to her---
"O, my dear mamma," said she, "Terefe tells me I am going to leave you, to be carried to a great place with iron gates, that never let any one come in but children; and that I shall not see you for I know not how many weeks, and only through iron bars.----O pray, mamma, don't let me be sent from you, I shall know no happiness without seeing my dear mamma; besides, how have I deserved to be shut up behind iron gratings!"

No words can express the anguish that laid hold of her heart, when the sweet girl thus addressed her; to know that it was already circulated through the family, and thus abruptly mentioned to her children, shocked her to the soul: and before

she could reply, Henry assailed her with the same complaint.

She trembled, she could scarce stand, and going to the nearest seat, while the poor children hung about her, entreating her not to send them from her, she endeavoured to recover and assume a degree of cheerfulness and resolution that cost her very dear in the effort.

“ Hearken to me, Henry, listen to what I say, Henrietta, don’t thus distress yourselves and vex me; you must know every thing that the Marquis and I propose is calculated for your good. ’Tis not customary or proper for young persons after a certain age to remain in the nursery; the time is now arrived when your minds require improvement. Henry would be ridiculous to be still in the care of women; he will go under the care of masters, whose instructions, if he attends to them, will make him both a good and a great man, an honour to me and all his friends; he will have many companions about his

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own age, that will improve and amuse him; he will often return to the castle, and every time I hope with great advantages, that will encrease our love and esteem.

For you, Henrietta, do not needlessly terrify yourself with the ridiculous tales you hear of iron bars, which have nothing in them to make you uneasy. You will be at a school with a vast number of young ladies, who will all love you if you behave well; you will be taught such accomplishments as will make you be esteemed by every one; and if you attend to your lessons, you will delight your mamma, and make her happy: I shall come to see you often, if I find you improve, and are attentive to your instructors."

"O that I will, my dear mamma; I will study night and day, that you may come very often, and say, 'how I love my Henrietta, she is a good girl, and improves greatly.'—O you shall very often come to me if it depends upon my diligence. I am very sorry to leave you, but

I will obey my mamma if it costs me a thousand tears, because I know it must be for my good, and it will make you happy."

Henry expressed himself much in the same manner. The poor lady embraced them closely to her bosom, which was almost bursting with the suppression of her emotions; in a voice scarcely articulate, she bid them pursue their walk, and depend upon it that they would find much pleasure in the situations designed for them.

She tore herself from them, and gladly retired to her apartment, that she might recover from the shock she had just experienced. She then began to reflect on the caution of Philip, "not to trust the Countess:" her opinion of that lady had frequently varied, but the natural candour and liberality of her mind, always inclined her to judge favourably where she could do so; and though sometimes disgusted, at other times alarmed, by the inconsistency of her behaviour, she made great allow-

allowances for foibles contracted in the gay world, and for the friendship she expressed for the Marquis. But this caution sunk deep; it recalled several late improprieties, and occasional incivilities, which had hurt her at the time, but which she had endeavoured to forget; now every circumstance arose to her view with double force, and she resolved to avail herself of the caution.

The faithful attendance of Philip was a source of much comfort, she had now one friend who would be assiduous to serve her; and though private interviews were repugnant to her sense of honour, she thought she might be justified in her present situation if for once or twice she waved that strict decorum due to her rank, and permitted an old servant to speak, when "he had much to say;" she could at any time forbid his return if it was improper.

Endeavouring thus, from necessity, to reconcile herself to a step strict propriety rather condemned, she was careful to se-

cure the key of the gate, which was but seldom used, that she might have nothing to impede the expected interview.

The Marquis had gone out on horseback in the morning, he returned not to dinner, the ladies waited a considerable time, and at length sat down to the table in some inquietude, both fearful that some accident had happened. The Marchioness could not learn which way he had directed his ride, it began to get dusk, and she was upon the point of sending servants on the different roads for intelligence, when his arrival was announced.

He entered with a gay air—"I have played the truant, ladies—you'll forgive me---some business obliged me to call on an honest notary at Salines, which could not be finished for me to partake of your dinner, I therefore eat my soup with him."

"Very condescending, indeed!" cried the Countess, with a haughty movement of her head; "I dare say the '*honest notary*' was very sensible of the honour."

He smiled, but made no reply; the Marchioness only said "she was glad her apprehensions for his safety were now done away." He was uncommonly entertaining, in high spirits and good humour; his lady endeavoured to be chearful, but the Countess was pettish, satyrical, and evidently displeased.

The Marchioness could not help remarking on this behaviour, it was extraordinary; what right had *she* to be offended? On the terms they lived together, there was no necessity for that strict etiquette which might to strangers have demanded an apology for not sending back a servant: there was no kind of ceremony observed in their intercourse with each other, and therefore the cause he had assigned was sufficiently satisfactory. She made her observations, but was silent.

At night she had little or no rest, her dear children chiefly occupied her thoughts; their little innocent remonstrances, and the idea of the painful sacrifice she was compelled to make, gave her the most poignant

concern: nor was that all, she had been educated herself in the Catholic religion, but her parents were no bigots, they esteemed a worthy character, and believed the road to heaven was open to all good men of every persuasion.

The uncle of Monsieur Bruyere was not generally known or suspected to be a protestant, much less the nephew; both were universally respected, the former, as a man of probity, generosity, and strict morals: the latter, though young, conducted himself so very unexceptionably, that he might have chosen almost any alliance without a fear of rejection: the parents of Madame Bruyere were flattered by the preference given to them, for though of noble birth, and an only child, her fortune was comparatively a trifle to his expectations.

No investigations, therefore, proceeded from them, but Monsieur Bruyere, like a man of honour, confessed his principles to the young lady; he assured her of his liberality in judging of all modes of religion; that he never should presume to interfere
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with the articles of her faith, he only claimed the same indulgence; perfectly assured, that in all essential points they were of the same opinion, and that worshipping the same God, and observing their duties to their fellow creatures, they followed every duty laid down by their Divine Creator, and pursued the same path to heaven.

She was not less liberal than himself, and their union was never interrupted by any disputes on the *modes* of religion, they were satisfied in knowing each strictly performed their several duties with piety, and without ostentation.

Madame Bruyere had given up her son to the direction of his father, and even Henrietta had received no instructions that militated against the principles he sought to implant in the mind of little Henry. For those wise parents contented themselves with pointing out the goodness of their Creator, as the great cause from which they derived every blessing, and as the Being they must constantly supplicate for a continuance of them.

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Their chief aim was to direct their natural propensities towards social love, to inculcate truth, sincerity and benevolence, in every word and action; and though each had their little foibles in disposition and manners, those foibles were corrected by kindness. The displeasure of a parent never extended beyond a gentle reprimand and being sent from their presence without an embrace, a punishment a thousand times more severely felt by them than any harsh usage, for their highest enjoyments sprung from the affectionate attention of their parents to amuse them.

Madame Bruyere, after the departure of her husband, strictly conformed to his mode of education, nor in one single point deviated from the line he had chalked out for Henry; and when she found herself unhappily deprived of his preceptor, she was more tenacious, she felt it more her duty to abide by his wishes, and to bring up his son a protestant, the principles of which faith very little differed from her own: reason and good sense having long
taught

taught her to discard a number of superstitions and absurdities which in those days made every Roman Catholic a bigot, uncharitable and unjust.

When disappointed in every plan she had wished to adopt for herself and children; when drawn in by art and terror to give her hand to the Marquis, she was deluded by the false hope of having her darling children under her own eye, though they were to have proper instructors for their education. This hope, this consolation, she was now going to be deprived of; Henry would be educated in the Catholic faith, contrary to the wishes of his father, and her sweet Henrietta, the soother of her sorrows, was to be taken from her and entrusted to the care of strangers.

However she might lean to the profession of the faith *she* had been brought up in, it had been her decided resolution to abide by the intentions of her lamented husband; therefore the plan now adopted was doubly aggravated, as it disappointed her predominant wish.

A sleepless night made her watch the tardy return of day; since the first fortnight the Marquis was much too fashionable a man to sleep constantly with his lady, therefore nothing impeded her from repairing early to the gardens. The morning was heavy, and the lowring clouds portended rain, the gloom of the weather seemed in unison with her mind; she dreaded to hear, what she was eager to know, and the perturbation of her spirits rendered her almost breathless when she arrived at the little bridge.

The moment she put her foot on it, the voice of Philip reached her—"I am here, Madame." She unlocked the gate, fastened it on the other side, and walked a few yards into the coppice. Her faithful servant would have thrown himself at her feet, she prevented him; "My good friend," said she, "accept my thanks for this attention, speak, tell me, what have you to say that concerns me to know."

"Alas! my lady," he replied, "have the goodness first to say if Monsieur and
Mademoi-

Mademoiselle are certainly to be sent from you?" "Too surely they are," replied she, "that dreadful stroke I have not the power to avert, and am sinking under it." "For Heaven's sake," returned he, "and as you wish to preserve them, resume that fortitude, that confidence in Providence which has yet supported you. Oh! Madame, I must wound your soul, I grieve to be the reporter——" "Torture me not," cried she, interrupting him, "tell me all, have I not survived a husband, and such a husband!—speak, speak at once!" "Compose yourself, I beseech you," said he, trembling, "and I will relate all." "*All, all!*" she exclaimed, "My God! what is this dreadful *all*?" "Patience, my dear lady:—On the morning of that day when I was turned out of the house, I was in a small room adjoining to the buttery, making a play-cart for Monsieur Henry, when I heard two voices talking pretty loud; at first I took no notice, supposing it to be about domestic matters, when at once my attention was arrested by the words——"

‘He

‘ He seems to be more madly in love now than ever ; the poor notary’s daughter bids fair to be soon mistress of the castle.’ ‘ How can that be ?’ asked another voice, ‘ What will the Marchioness say, or how will our *cousin Countess* like it ?’ They both laughed heartily at the last words, when the first replied, ‘ As to the Marchioness, *as you call her*, she is nobody, he has nothing to do but terrify her about her children, and she submits to any thing ; it matters not to her, which cousin or guest he brings here—but the Countess is another thing, *she* is a termagant, and whatever reasons she had to submit to his passion for her you *call Marchioness*, *she* will never bear another cousin quietly, so, if she is not got rid of, we shall have devilish high fun among their quarrels.’

‘ Fun,’ returned the other, ‘ I know we shall pay for it, for all the time that he was so beside himself in love with our present lady, I am sure he was like a madman to every body.’

‘ Aye,’ said the first that spoke, ‘ *that* was another affair ; this Miss is poor, humbly
born,

born, yet vain and coquetish, he wont have such a confounded deal of trouble with her, she is cunning enough, and as artful as the devil, she'll soon rout them both, you'll see, though there *may be a storm first*; but you'll have a look at the little gipsy, she and her father dine here the day after to-morrow."

"Then, Madame, they went on such impertinent language, not fit to be repeated, and which indeed I was tired of hearing, so I got off, grieved enough you may believe; but I thought it my duty to acquaint you, my lady, and knowing you walked every morning, I thought to watch in the copse till I had an opportunity of seeing you—but, God bless you, Madame, added he, falling on his knees, don't you look so terrified, I shall never forgive myself, if I have made you thus ill—pray, pray, speak to me."

The poor lady, unable to support herself during this long tale, had sunk down at the foot of a tree, resting her head against its trunk, but before he had concluded the last words, she had ceased to hear,

hear, her senses were suspended, though not entirely fled; the posture and agitation of Philip a little restored her, she held out her hand to him, though she could not presently recover her voice.

When speech returned, "Enough, my good Philip," said she, deeply sighing, "I see the unhappy lot I have drawn for myself, and I must bear it, while I can; my own weakness and want of fortitude has prepared the whole, and I have only myself to blame; there are some words that you have repeated that terrify me—what could the man mean by saying, 'the Marchioness, *as you call her*'—that expression shocks me." "And so it did me, Madame," replied he; "but I told you, yesterday, I have a friend in the house, and on her I rely for further information of what is going forward—a poor young woman, who had been ill in a fever, the under chamber-maid, when she was confined to her bed, and lay unnoticed by any one, I privately fetched a doctor, who attended and saved her: the poor thing had no money, that was a trifle, thank God, I could

I could pay him for saving a fellow-creature, and his demands were moderate enough."

"How comes it," asked the Marchioness, "that I was not made acquainted with her illness?"

"Ah! my lady, you had then troubles enough of your own, I could not bear to add to them; but ever since poor Janette has been so grateful; she loves and honours *you* too, Madame; I wish she was about your person.—'Philip,' said she, when I left the house, 'depend upon my good will and services, 'tis my duty;' and then she told me of a cottage where I might be received, and get a lodging, and where I might sometimes hear from her."

"What, then, Philip," returned his lady, "have you a regard for this young woman?"

"Only as a poor orphan, Madame, who is made a slave of by the two lady chamber-maids; she is only sixteen, and the poor thing looks on me as a father—from her I shall gain a knowledge of all that is going
3 forward;

forward; I contrived to send her instructions yesterday, and if I can serve my honoured lady, 'tis all that can make me wish for life *now*."

He drew his hand across his eyes to conceal the falling tear, when he pronounced the word *now*; it was well understood, and shot like a bolt of ice through the unfortunate Marchioness, who after pausing a little to recover herself, said,

"I thank you, my good Philip, for your zeal and affection; the information you have given me, certainly has distressed me greatly; but if I am to be miserable, I have no right to complain, I must learn to bear, and inure myself to suffer, 'tis but lately that I have entered into the school of affliction, I will not shrink from the trials I am called upon to sustain."

Again she paused, then resumed in a more elevated tone of voice—"My friend, I cannot encourage spies over my husband's conduct, I feel my obligations to your kindness, but I cannot condescend to receive
intelli-

intelligence, however interesting to me, that is clandestinely obtained."

"What, Madame," cried he, interrupting her eagerly, "not if it concerned your honour, your life?"

"The first," replied she, "is in my own keeping, and for the last, did not two darlings twine about my heart, to draw me down to earth, how gladly would my soul take its flight to join my ever dear Bruyere! But I have no fear for my life; the Marquis may be gay, and inconstant, no matter, I shall do *my* duty; and though what I have heard has wounded my heart, I will give him no *pretence* to use me ill."

"Will you not, then, permit your faithful servant to see you here sometimes?"

"Excuse me, my good Philip, duty bears hard against inclination; I dare not indulge the latter, but if I can serve you by a character, by friends, by money, write openly to me, I have courage enough to brave resentment in doing what is right and just, but I should never forgive myself, if I incurred the reproach of seducing a servant
from

from her duty, to be an incendiary in the house of her master; nor will prudence or decorum permit me to come here a second time.

“ Judge, my friend,” said she, tears falling from her eyes, “ what a sacrifice I make to that duty that enslaves me, when I refuse to see a man I love and honour, for his fidelity and affection to the best of masters and his unfortunate family. Yes, Philip, I repeat, I love and respect you; a heart like yours is entitled to it; but till happier days arrive, we can meet no more, at least, *not here.*”

She saw the agitations of the poor man, and unable to suppress her own, she hastily opened the gate, and giving him a last kind look, her hand to her heart, she shut it quickly, and hastened from the spot.

Desirous of recovering herself, before she entered the house, lest she should meet any of the servants, without considering which way she directed her steps, she came to that alcove so often the scene of her distressful

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emotions; she started on entering it, but flung herself on the seat.

“Why do my feet wander to this fatal spot, where my weak and irresolute mind suffered itself to be terrified and persuaded into a compliance that has put the finishing blow to complete my misery.

“I have no longer the power to help myself, my children, or my friends; I have now a lord that commands all, and I am a passive instrument in his hands to be played upon by terror, and awed into submission by my apprehensions for my children:

“And this man is the grateful, the obliged friend of my dear Bruyere! O, the abuse of words! Never, never could a truly grateful heart act as he now does by me and the unhappy orphans committed to his care: vainly does he try to varnish over the distress he gives me, under a pretence for my children’s advantage; ’tis to wound me, and free himself from objects that remind him of his duty.

“Thank Heaven, I have had the resolution to perform mine! How grateful to

me is the fidelity of poor Philip ; how interesting, how serviceable, perhaps, the intelligence he could bring me ! Yet I have withstood the temptation, repressed the wishes of my heart, and yielded to propriety that *forbid* all information surreptitiously obtained."

She continued some time revolving on the sorrows that awaited her, and the difficulties she had to encounter ; she was that day to see a young woman the Marquis was said to be attached to, and knowing the circumstance, it became her to act with caution, that she might studiously avoid giving offence to him, or betray any suspicion.

She rightly judged that he must observe some respect to her, whilst he supposed her ignorant of his new flame, but if once his folly was known, he would throw off all restraint, seek to justify his error by pride and authority, and then adieu to even an appearance of civility or kindness, for from whom could she hope for compassion or redress ?

It

It was impossible, indeed, to suppress indignation and contempt for a man whose art and duplicity had exceeded all suspicion or credibility in his behaviour to her; neither could she forgive herself for being the dupe and victim to his abominable hypocrisy.

She returned to the house, and met the Countess in the breakfast parlour, her countenance was unpleasant, and the natural dignity of her person seemed to have acquired superior haughtiness.

With her features a little relaxed, she returned the polite salute the Marchioness paid to her, adding, "You have been walking, is the air keen? Your eyes look red and heavy." "Possibly, for want of rest," answered the Marchioness; "I had no sleep last night, and really the morning is not calculated to give a freshness to one's looks." The other made no reply, but seating herself, "Do you know who the company are that is expected to dinner?" "The Marquis has not informed me, Madam." "Then *I can*," returned she:—

“Two ridiculous coxcombs, and the little Notary, with his aukward daughter: I confess, he is not very choice in his selection; the two last are not accustomed, I believe, to dine with Marquises, nor would I be of the party, but from a desire to astonish and mortify those little presumptuous people.”

“The Marquis has an undoubted right to invite whom he pleases to his table,” answered she, “and it becomes me to do the honours of it with respect to his guests; I hope you will not disconcert me by any ridicule thrown on them, which possibly they may not deserve.”

“We shall see; we shall see,” cried she peevishly, and the appearance of the Marquis changed the subject. He addressed himself with politeness to the Countess, with a cool civility to his lady: the first was haughty and reserved; the latter was complaisant and attentive, though her heart smote her for the duplicity she was obliged to assume.

Very little conversation took place, till he rose to retire, then turning with a care-

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less air, as if a sudden recollection had struck him, "Apropos, I believe I omitted to name my expected guests; the Chevalier La Fere, Monsieur Cranfac, two lively young men of fortune, and Monsieur Corthouze, my good friend the notary, with his amiable daughter—you will receive them with respect, and treat them with kindness.

"The wretch!" cried the Countess involuntarily, as he left the room, then meeting the eyes of the Marchioness, she repeated, recovering herself, "*What wretches!* My dear friend," added she, "if you love me, let us join to mortify those little Bourgeois, that have the confidence to intrude themselves among their superiors." "By no means," answered she, "it would ill become me in my own house; and very possibly those persons so inferior in rank, may possess minds that entitle them to respect: I honour virtue and accomplishments, however degraded by situation; a noble soul, my dear Madame, does not always dwell with a person of rank, and may

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oftentimes

ostentimes elevate a peasant above a nobleman."

"Mighty wise and sententious indeed!" exclaimed the Countess, "and perhaps a convenient opinion to adopt in some cases, but be that as it may, I will not lose my diversion, let the event terminate how it will." They separated, and the Marchioness returned to her apartment not a little struck by the preceding conversation, which afforded her room for meditation.

She remained with her children (the hours she passed with them growing more precious to her, as she dreaded the approach of that period when she must be deprived of that sweet and only consolation) enjoying their tender caresses, 'till the noise of carriages carried her down, that she might be ready to receive the expected guests. The Marquis was already in the saloon, and the Countess directly followed.

Monsieur and Mademoiselle Corthouse were announced; the young lady was led in by her father, tall, tolerably genteel, a very handsome Brunette, with a pair of spirited

spirited black eyes, a bold conscious air, and an attempt at being elegantly dressed, formed the figure and appearance of this young woman.

The Marquis presented her to his lady with a gay air, she saluted her politely, Mademoiselle, not the least abashed, returned it with an impertinent familiarity that occasioned a momentary disgust. The Countess revenged her; when the Marquis led her to that lady, she assumed a stern haughty air, that *looked* Mademoiselle into humility; she shrunk a little from her piercing eyes, that seemed to take in her whole person with an air of scorn. The Marquis looked displeased and confused, but seated his guest, and then introduced the father.

The Marchioness had already glanced her eyes over *him*, her sense and penetration easily discovered the mean servility of a man eager to raise himself from obscurity; a conscious littleness that betrayed itself in every look, through an evident endeavour

to appear unembarrassed—she read him justly.

Monsieur Corthouse was the son of a vine dresser, who having six sons, found there were more than was necessary to assist him, and therefore gave the two youngest his blessing, and recommended them to Providence. They both obtained situations as lacquais; Joseph, to whose acquaintance we are introduced, was taken into the house of a notary, one who had the worldly wisdom to determine on getting money at the expence of his litigious clients; the means, he was not nice about—crafty, shrewd and indefatigable, he could not fail of success.

Joseph, by his docility and sharpness, soon obtained the notice of his master, and he was not backward in observing his rising favor. As good minds are drawn together by an involuntary sentiment of esteem, so a deep cunning heart is not long in discovering a similar disposition: Joseph was taught to write, improved in his reading, and his master found him so apt a scholar,

scholar, that in a very short time he was translated from the kitchen to the office, and entered so fully into all his good patron's schemes, that very few secrets were concealed from Joseph, who begun now to feel himself of consequence.

He was about eighteen, when one morning, after many praises on his good sense and cleverness, he said, " My good Joseph, I have a proposal to make for thy advantage : a relation of mine, a good girl, with two hundred crowns, is mightily taken with thee ; she wishes to marry ; I have a regard for her, and for thee ; my wife loves her not, because she is handsome, so the poor thing has no friend but me. If you will marry her, you shall live hard by, remain in my office with a good salary, and I will do my best to make you both comfortable and rich, in a short time."

The wise notary explained himself to no fool ; Joseph perfectly understood the degree of relationship ; he had seen the girl, she was pretty, two hundred crowns was a temptation, he was not nice, and had to

look forward to a comfortable home, besides having his master under his thumb.

All these prudent considerations passed rapidly in his mind, and, after expressing "how earnestly it was his wish and duty to oblige his dear and honoured master, he made no difficulty of submitting himself to his pleasure and the good liking of Mademoiselle."

When two people are well agreed, little ceremony is required to put a finishing stroke to their mutual wishes; the contract was soon drawn out, and in two days the fortunate Joseph was in possession of a pretty wife, two hundred crowns, and very decent apartments. No longer remembering his translation from the vineyard, he now grew pert, self-conceited, and in his own opinion a very clever fellow.

Six months after this auspicious wedding, he had the felicity of being a father to a very pretty girl, to the great joy of his good master, who most kindly interested himself for his little relation, and good friend Joseph. All things went on smoothly for

three years, in which time another child was born, who died in its infancy, but that was no great trouble; the little girl thrived, and was a perfect beauty, the notary was generous, they abounded in all the good things of this life, and Joseph made money fast; he was now a man of consequence, and therefore did not chuse to limit his expences.

But alas, all human happiness is transitory;

The poor notary was one morning seized with an apoplectic fit, just as he was about to draw up a memorial against a poor widow, who had exhausted her little all in fees, to retain him as a friend—he dropt from his chair, Joseph broke his fall, but he was senseless; the family were alarmed, his wife and sister, who lived with him, immediately sent for medical assistance, it availed nothing, the dear friend of Joseph was gone for ever.

The trouble and consternation of this faithful coadjutor, 'tis impossible to describe; his good friend had often talked of

making a will to leave something handsome to his cousin and her husband; Joseph now trembled with hope and fear, yet the former was predominant; he ought not to doubt the kindness of his best friend. The widow and her sister looked coldly on him, that was a trifle, he believed their features would be still more contracted when this expected will made its appearance.

The widow sent for a notary to examine into the state of her late husband's effects, in concert with Joseph, who had with great prudence placed seals on the desks the moment his master was no more; it must be confessed the sister had first suggested the measure, and saw it executed.

The gentleman of the law arrived, Joseph's heart beating with more than usual rapidity, they proceeded with great deliberation to investigate minutely, every book, parcel, and scrap of paper. "Here is nothing like a will, no traces of any memorandum that can lead to such an expectation; the good gentleman has certainly

tainly died intestate." "I am *sure*," cried Joseph, agitated, and scarce able to respire, "I can almost *swear* there is a will."

"Where is it to be found?" returned the other, "since you are so sure, doubtless you know where it is." "We may have overlooked it perhaps;" the *perhaps* affronted the man of business, "Young man, if you know of any drawers, trunks, or boxes, more than what we have examined, speak; if not, I am well assured not the least scrap of paper has gone through my hands without a strict examination." Joseph was confounded, almost distracted, he looked, and looked again, 'twas a fruitless search; and at length with a sigh and a despairing look, he was compelled to acknowledge, "it was strange, unaccountable, his friend had always told him, he would not be without a will, yet to be sure there was no such thing to be found."

The notary was no novice in the art of reading mens looks, he saw the disappointment

pointment that clouded the features of the poor young man, but he saw it without pity; for the vanity and pert self-sufficiency of Joseph had been pretty well noticed among the fraternity, and rendered him an object of scorn to the gentlemen of the law. He then took upon him to act for the widow, the seals of Joseph were no longer necessary, and his own were affixed in their room.

Behold here the downfall of our good cousin and her husband, she had no longer a benefactor to administer either to her pleasure or support; a moment had deprived her of every expectation and hope. Joseph, alas, who can speak the commotions of *his* bosom! His friend was gone, he had lost his place; the handsome salary was no more: he had an expensive wife, a child to support, and on what? literally nothing—some furniture, a few trinkets, Madam's fine clothes; these were all the riches he had left.

This affectionate couple, so kind and complying heretofore, now broke out into
mutual

mutual lamentations, and from thence proceeded to mutual recrimination, 'till at length the smothered passions burst forth, he, was a mean contemptible fellow that deserved to be hanged for not making more of his situation when he knew how much his master had been in his power; she, was a base, abandoned, extravagant wench, and he was no longer bound to support her, and a child that had no claims upon him.

In short, this terrible altercation came to that extreme height, that their hands grew as nimble as their tongues, and it was not until Joseph had his face streaming with blood, and the lady laid quietly on the floor without any appearance of life, that this unlucky quarrel terminated. He washed off the blood, and thought it might be as well to sprinkle a little water over the senseless fair one; he was not sparing in the operation; she revived, and the injuries she had sustained were less than he apprehended; both were sulky, but both stood in need of comfort; neither

neither had any friends; necessity taught them, they must not desert each other; and on this principle the late rupture was forgotten; they shook hands, and again peace was re-established.

Joseph next day returned to the office, and attended regularly, though no business was going on, until after the funeral was over; he was then desired to wait upon the widow, "What was your yearly salary, Sir?" he could not impose upon her, the entry in the books mentioned the sum, though his kind master had trebled it by his generosity; "Sixty crowns, Madame, but that was a trifle to what Monsieur—"

"No doubt, Sir, my husband was very beneficent to you, so much the better, doubtless you have saved money, I have nothing to do with that—I understand your salary was paid up to about three weeks; there, Sir, there are sixty crowns, a year's wages, I have no further occasion for your services. That sum will enable you to live 'till you are better provided for—Adieu, Sir, I wish to see you no more."

Joseph

Joseph could make no reply, he pocketed the money and returned to his wife; she raged like a tragedy princess, but it availed nothing. The next day he sallied forth to offer his services to others in the same profession as his master; his character had gone before him, he found every door shut against him, every gentleman was fully engaged; he returned provoked and despairing. "Let us leave this senseless ridiculous tribe," said the wife, "we will go to some smaller town, set up for yourself, be active, foment little quarrels, consult your books, assume consequence, and my life for it we may profit by the folly and ignorance of *others*." Her prudent husband relished this advice, he thought too there might happen *another* kind of profitable business; she was still young and tolerably handsome, a new face might engage attention, another benefactor perhaps would start forth to give them consolation for the one they had lost, and he determined to be more frugal.

Their effects were soon converted into cash.

cash, and they pitched their tents at Salines with new hopes and expectations. He took upon him the man of business, she the well-bred lady, and Miss their daughter was sent as a day boarder to a convent in the town.

It has been already said, he was shrewd, artful, and not deficient in that kind of understanding that often carries a bold man through the world, whilst the modest man of real merit, shrinks from the undiscerning multitude, and is over-looked by the more judicious; who do not always take the trouble of discriminating.

Monfieur Corthouse, for we no longer presume to call him Joseph, began now to make some figure at Salines; 'tis true he could but just live, but then he lived well, and better it might have been, but for an unlucky disappointment to his best hopes; a short time after they were settled, Madame Corthouse took the small-pox, she recovered, if it could be called a recovery to survive the loss of the few charms,

charms, on which both had founded such certain expectations of profit.

She was mortified, he was grieved, but the evil was without a remedy; and despair taught them patience, they therefore clubbed wits to deceive others, and Mademoiselle growing very handsome, with a smattering of accomplishments and a mind such as might naturally be expected from those to whom she owed her being, and who only taught her to set a value on her person. They were so well satisfied with the progress she made, that they rubbed through their little difficulties, promising to themselves a plentiful harvest hereafter.

But how little can we depend on future events, and how often do the wicked receive their just punishment in the attainment of their wishes!

The day that Mademoiselle Corthouse became sixteen, a period long and anxiously wished for, she was to be taken to an assembly in the town, where frequently the neighbouring gentlemen came to amuse them-

themselves, though it was not visited by any of the female noblesse.

The young lady was adorned with every finery their limited purse could supply; shewy frippery was the most she could boast, but she was handsome, forward, and artful.

The Marquis St. Juliers had that day dined with a neighbour who was going to lounge an hour at this assembly, and proposed to him to look in upon them in his way to the castle. The Marquis consented, and his inflammable heart was immediately caught by the face and bold obtrusive airs of the notary's daughter; he attached himself to her at once, and gaining information of her name, and circumstances, he in a moment designed the young lady for his own. He whispered many pretty nothings in her ear, and assured her, that he should soon pay *his respects* to her father.

The girl was intoxicated, the mother frantic with delight; she saw now the accomplishment of all her tedious hopes and expectations

expectations drawing to a period. "The Marquis St. Juliers, young, handsome, immensely rich! Heavens, what a fortunate girl!" "But he is married," cried Monsieur Corthouse, and not long since."

"As if that was of any consequence," answered she, with a look of reproach and disdain, "all we have to do, is to procure a good settlement, and also some little advantages to ourselves; then what have we to care for. When she is elevated, she will have plenty of admirers; and we well know that if we can keep a good table, and open our doors freely, there is no fear of company to partake of our feasts without giving themselves the trouble to enquire by what means we support it."

Monsieur was convinced, all his golden days were going to be restored, more splendid than ever; for here would be *grandeur* attached to opulence. They retired to rest the happiest people in the world; but Madame Corthouse could not sleep, *her* brain was at work so earnestly and so rapid, that the morning dawned
and

and found her absolutely in a fever: at first they paid no great attention to her disorder, but as the sight of her daughter caused her imagination to give way to a thousand extravagant ideas, before noon she was really in a high fever, at times delirious, and they were obliged to send for medical assistance.

Whether her brain was too feeble to bear the intoxication of her senses, or whether she was unskillfully treated, cannot be known, but certain it is, she was deprived of her reason, nor when the fever was reduced, did the least alteration take place in the disorder of her head: she raved incessantly on her daughter, talked only of clothes and jewels, and if any one approached her, she ordered them to kneel, nor would receive food from any person unless given in that humble posture.

After a fortnight's fruitless exertions to restore her, the physician pronounced it a hopeless case, and she was placed in the hospital De Dieu, under the care of proper persons

persons accustomed to manage those unfortunate beings visited by such a heavy affliction. Such was the termination of all *her* hopes, and little did she deserve pity.

Monsieur Corthouse and his daughter, for as such he had ever treated her, felt very little sorrow or regret for this unhappy woman; he had long since ceased to view her with any regard, and Mademoiselle, who had pretty often smarted under the violence of her temper, secretly congratulated herself on her emancipation from fear and restraint, and took upon herself the conduct of her father's house with all the indifference and confidence imaginable.

The Marquis St. Juliers, received more than a transient impression from the charms of Mademoiselle Corthouse; he *made business* to consult the father, and withdrew some little concerns from his former notary to afford him plausible pretences for visits to the house. The father and daughter perfectly understood each other,

other, they translated the meaning of these visits, and having no fastidious troublesome qualms that adhere to persons of honour and integrity; they freely consulted on the most likely measures to draw permanent advantages from the folly of the Marquis.

But the young lady had vanity to gratify as well as interest; she played on and off with the passion of her admirer by a thousand artifices unknown to a virtuous and ingenuous mind, 'till he became absolutely intoxicated; and would not have scrupled at any sacrifice to attain the accomplishment of his desires. She demanded a most extravagant settlement for life, the appointment of her father as his steward, and lastly as a preliminary to *her* favour, that they should be introduced at the castle, and admitted there as constant visitors.

The infatuated Marquis blindly complied with every requisition, all the articles were signed and sealed, and this visit which introduced Monsieur and Mademoiselle

Corthouse

Corthouse to the acquaintance of our readers, was to precede the conclusion of the treaty on her part.

The Marchioness, who had her mind impressed with the information derived from Philip; saw in the confident assumption of her guest, the looks of the Marquis, and the ill-concealed emotions that agitated Monsieur Corthouse, cause to believe she had not been misinformed.

She conducted herself however like an angel, and with the strictest propriety; she perceived that the Countess would sufficiently avenge her cause, by the haughty and ironical airs she assumed whenever the father or daughter spoke, or that the Marquis addressed them; she had far more difficulty to repress her indignation against the free manners of the young men, who were, in truth, libertine companions of the Marquis, introduced by him solely for the infamous purpose of engaging the attentions of the two ladies.

The Chevalier La Fere, attached himself to the Countess; Monsieur Cransac,

uttered a volley of unmeaning compliments to the Marchioness; she heard him at first with an indifference that was interpreted by him into encouragement, and increased his impertinence, to that degree, that looking with smothered vexation on the Marquis, and observing that he was otherwise engaged, and perfectly inattentive, she was roused into indignation, and turning from him with every mark of contempt; "it is a pity, Sir, that so much eloquence should be thrown away; there is a young lady in the room to whom it might be more properly addressed than to the lady of this house."

"But my divine Marchioness," answered he, not the least abashed, "do you not observe the lady in question is otherwise engaged; and were she not," added he, shrugging his shoulders, "I assure you she is not at all to *my* taste." "That is a little unfortunate," returned she, with a scornful smile, and rising from her seat, "as it happens, Sir, that you *are not at all* likely to stand well in *my* good graces."

"I

“I am very unhappy, Marquis,” cried he aloud, “your lady here ~~absolutely~~ refuses my devoirs, and bids me despair of gaining her favour.” “I hope,” returned the Marquis, in a tone of displeasure, no lady, that calls herself the mistress of this house will insult my friends.”—“No, my Lord,” said she, with spirit, “I insult no one, *your friends* claim my respect; but I know also what is due to myself, and have a right to choose my *own*, and if the selection does not fall on this gentleman, he may blame my judgment, if he pleases, and at least entitle himself to my civility.”

“Come, come,” cried the Countess, “don’t be severe on the gentlemen, I have listened very patiently to the finest encomiums that gallantry could suggest, and I assure you, I think they perform the parts assigned them to a miracle. Confess the truth, my good friend,” continued she to the Marquis, “*they had their lesson*, and were taught like parrots to engage the attention of us children, whilst you grave ones there are settling some very important

treaty, or entering on a negotiation for that purpose."

This malicious sally of her's struck the gentlemen dumb, the Marquis affected to laugh, but smothered rage converted it into a grin; the young lady conveniently dropped her handkerchief, which gave her an opportunity of hiding her chagrin; the father began stroking his ruffles into nice order; and for a few moments a general silence prevailed.

The Marchioness, though secretly pleased, chose not to provoke her Lord too far, and therefore improving upon the idea that the Countess had sported, she affected to laugh heartily; "very fine," cried she, "you see the sagacity of this lady has discovered your plot against our vanity, and its want of success will induce us to pardon your intention of diverting yourselves for an hour or two at our expence—so now we are all good friends again."

Unprepared to answer this raillery of the ladies, they had nothing for it but to
join

join in the laugh, and pretend to accuse them of cruelty in reducing them to the dull entertainment of matter of fact conversation, so little according with the vivacity of Frenchmen.

The visit was not prolonged more than an hour after the beaux had been thrown out of their play; they sat uneasy, Monsieur Corthouse was miserable, tired of having nothing to say, and his handsome daughter had completed her triumph of being introduced to the ladies of the castle, and satisfying her curiosity.

Bold as she was by nature, proud and insolent from the attention of the Marquis, she could not meet the mild penetrating eye of the Marchioness, without feeling her own littleness; and the civilities, good breeding induced that lady to shew her, were paid with a dignified politeness she was incapable of making a proper return to.

The gentlemen were the first to take leave; the Marquis requested they would call frequently, as they intended making
D 3 some

some stay in the country; "not I faith," whispered Monsieur Cranfac, "your ladies are too keen and too sentimental for me." "That objection may soon be remedied," answered the Marquis in the same tone; "we shall see about it."

Within a few minutes after the father and daughter prepared to depart, the Marchioness returned a polite, but ceremonious, compliment to their half-broken words; the Countess exalting her head, condescended only a half-bow without speaking at all. The Marquis looked displeased, "We shall see you often, I hope, my amiable friends,"—were *his* kind words, and attended them to a carriage he had ordered to take them home.

On his return, he found the Countess laughing, but she changed her looks in a moment. "It must be owned," said she, haughtily, "that you have entertained us highly to day with your new friends; the young men are puppies, such as one meets with every where, and therefore are not deserving of notice; but the wretched
mean

mean looking animal you call Monsieur Corthouse, and his bold, vulgar daughter, are too contemptible, I think, to be brought here as companions; and if this lady submits to be insulted by the presence of such objects, I do assure you I will not."

"At your pleasure, Madame," returned he, coldly, "you have the liberty of choice; but I shall most assuredly see what company I please in my own house."

"How, Marquis!" cried she, her eyes flashing fire, "do you dare to insult me thus; to forget your obligations; and now that I am no longer an object of consequence in your plans, presume to forget what is due to my rank, and reduce me to a level with your bourgeois?"

"Spare your resentment, Madame; I am not just prepared to contend with it; I shall pay you all possible civility, but you have no right to expect it should be an exclusive one; others have claims perhaps, though not entitled to it by their rank in society."

“Gracious heaven!” she exclaimed, claims! What claims? Such only as your depraved and capricious taste can give them, and which only serve to make them more ridiculous and detestable.—Yes, hope not to deceive me, I see through all your artifices——”

“Then, Madame,” returned he, bowing, and hastily quitting the room, “my presence is not necessary to give you further information.” The Marchioness had been an alarmed, and no unconcerned spectator of this extraordinary altercation: when the Marquis had left the room, the Countess stamped with fury—“Let me entreat you, Madame,” said the Marchioness, “to moderate your resentment; if they *are* improper persons for your society, some particular cause, perhaps of consequence to his interest, may have induced him to intrude them on you just now.”

The other was walking the room in great agitation; stopping suddenly, “Cause, yes, I divine the cause, a sudden attachment

ment to that vulgar girl; but how dared he presume to bring her here! He shall severely repent the insult.—She flew out of the room, and left the poor Marchioness excessively fluttered; she had no room to doubt but that the Countess was right in her conjectures, and her too evident discomposure spoke a more than common interest in the business; her pride might be hurt, but there seemed to be more than *one* passion roused by the apprehension of this attachment.

She remained some time buried in a retrospection of past scenes; *if* the Countess felt a preference for the Marquis, *if* any connection had ever subsisted between them, how came *she* to promote so warmly his union with another? Her conduct, in short, was inexplicable; but she saw in her ungovernable rage the whole would be shortly developed, and she trembled to think what information might follow to affect her own peace.

The Marquis returned to supper, the Countess refused to appear; he called her

a ridiculous, obstinate woman; the Marchioness was polite and attentive, but not gay or affectionate: when he spoke so contemptibly of the Countess—"You will pardon me, Sir," said she, in an impressive tone, "if I cannot help deeming your behaviour to that lady very indecorous, and deviating much from that consideration she is entitled to as a woman of rank, your *relation* and your *guest*: she is certainly entitled to your apologies, previous to her voluntary appearance at your table."

"Such may be *your* opinion," returned he, "and such *her* expectation; neither of which I shall accord with; I best know what she is entitled to, and I am perfectly indifferent to the consequences of her malice and disappointment.

"I hope, Madame, your children will be ready to accompany me in two days to the situations I have chosen for them."

"In *two* days, Sir!" "Yes, the day after to-morrow I shall go to Besançon, and take Henry; the following day you may, if you please, go with me, and see

Hen-

Henrietta placed at the convent of St. Mary." Incapable of speaking, the Marchioness tried to repress her emotions, but they burst all restraint, and a kind of hysterical fit seized her; he rung for an attendant with much composure, and left the room.

He retired to his dressing-room; but wicked and callous as his heart was, he could not shut out some painful reflections that obtruded on his mind.

"What has this woman done to deserve the distress I am loading *her* with? Her husband I hated; he had been a fond, officious friend, that heaped obligations upon me: my soul scorns the idea of obligations; I could never think of him without pain, and hoped never to have seen him again. He obtruded upon me with his whole family, expecting my assistance, every favour conferred upon me fresh in his memory, no doubt to look me into confusion, and claim as a right a participation of my fortune.

"His sight was hateful; but he brought

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a claim-

a claimant with him that penetrated to the inmost folds of my heart; had *she* been less precise, less obstinate, and more complying, things would have been otherwise; her own folly must be answerable for the consequences. I acknowledge her virtues, but they have no merit in my eyes: my fortune enables me to gratify my inclinations, and though I feel that saucy, intruding monitor called conscience, I will silence the obtrusive guest, and enjoy the pleasures of the world while I can.

“ The Countess no longer necessary, I care not how soon *she* takes leave; and should *she* in her rage discover more than *she* ought, farewell to all disguise; if the other behaves prudent and submissive, I will gratify the troublesome claims of gratitude, and provide decently for her and her children; if otherwise, if her pride and fantastical notions of honour and virtue militate against my desires, I shall know how to command her silence, and my conscience will be perfectly at rest, *when*

when the choice of good or evil depends upon herself."

Whilst the Marquis thus communed with his own thoughts, the unhappy object of them had been restored to sense and feeling; she was led to her own apartment, politeness would have carried her to the Countess's, but she was obliged to send an apology, and be put to bed.

It would be impossible to paint the distraction of her thoughts under the variety of misery that seemed ready to burst upon her; from heaven alone she sought compassion and relief, and her firm reliance on the never failing goodness of the Almighty, seemed to diffuse a temporary comfort to her mind.

"Many," cried she, "are doomed to suffer a variety of wretchedness; many worthy persons sink under earthly afflictions; but if they support their trials with patient submission, there is little doubt but their reward in the eternal world will amply compensate for temporary miseries: else my excellent Bruyere had not perished
in

in a strange land, a sacrifice to power and injustice."

This excellent woman having tranquilized her mind by the duties of religion, and submission to the decrees of heaven, endeavoured to arm herself to bear with firmness the much dreaded parting with her children.

"Their little hearts," thought she, "will keenly feel being torn from the tenderness of a mother, let me not add to their regrets by my distress; I must teach them to believe 'tis the work of *my* hands, intended for their benefit, and that it will be ungrateful in them to repine, when they are to reap the advantage."

The morning had begun to dawn before the Marchioness got any rest, and she was astonished, on waking, to find she had so much over slept her accustomed hour. When the servant came to attend her, she said, "There has been a sad bustle below, Madame, between the Countess and our Lord the Marquis; she has sent twice with impatience to know if you were visible; and

and had you not commanded my attendance just now, I believe she would have broke in upon your slumbers."

Before the Marchioness could reply, the lady mentioned sent to say, "that she waited impatiently for her in the saloon." This message hastened the Marchioness, and in a few moments she joined her, apologizing for her late attendance. The other appeared not to notice the excuse, but taking her hand, her whole frame trembling with agitation, her face inflamed with anger, and her eyes wild and terrible—

"You see before you," said she, "the most despicable, most ill used of women; and your——basest, bitterest enemy!" The Marchioness started, and withdrew her hand.—"Sit down," resumed the Countess, "and listen to me; I speak not from compunction, from any regard to *you*; nor will I, cruelly as I am injured, utter one word beyond the bounds of truth: but that monster of deceit shall be unmasked, and you shall no longer be
a victim

a victim to duplicity and deliberate wickedness."

This preface rendered the Marchioness unable to stand, and she remained, without speaking one word, a silent auditor of a confession that was to plant daggers into her heart, destroy every particle of hope, and leave her the sad object of endless misery and despair.

She then entered upon the detail of her first acquaintance with the Marquis, and every circumstance we have before related, of his invitation to her a second time.—"He knew," said she, "the necessities my folly had plunged me into, that infatuation for play has been my ruin; to that I owe all the guilt and atrocious actions that I have been drawn into. He knew I was overwhelmed with debts; the villain promised to pay them all, to redeem a small estate (my last stake) that I had mortgaged, and to present me with a handsome sum, if I would assist his endeavours to subdue a haughty woman whom he loved, and the wife of a man that he detested."

The

The Marchioness started, she sickened with the painful emotions that shook her whole frame; but she was silent, and endeavoured to subdue them.

"I scruple not to confess," continued the Countess, "that I readily accorded with his infamous proposal. I came; to see and know you must excite either love or hatred—Envy at your perfections produced the latter, and I felt a diabolical pleasure in subduing, in humbling that merit that was a tacit reproach to myself."

She then mentioned the introduction of the Chevalier, his sister, and Monsieur Le Grand, whose characters she displayed, and who were to be mere puppets, to set off others by the contrast—she explained every scheme and artifice, put in practice to deceive, and bring her to an affection for the Marquis.

"Your obstinate virtue tired us out, and at length produced that kind of passion in the Marquis that required the satisfaction of revenge, as well as the gratification of love. And, in short," said she,

"not

“ not to dwell on the subject, we were reduced to desperate measures ; we invented a tale to annihilate all your hopes, and throw you into the power of the Marquis.

“ Your husband’s death was a false report, and *all* but the letter, which his unsuspecting friendship put into the hands of the Marquis when he left the castle ; *all* else is false ; Monsieur Bruyere, I believe, still lives, though dead to you ; letters were received *after* your marriage with the Marquis, that he was in the power of persons who would for ever prevent his return. You see, however, that your marriage is not legal ; and now ’tis the intention of that monster soon to get rid of you, and make room for the mean born, despicable girl by whom he is at present enslaved ; he refuses me the sum he had promised, fool as I was to take *his word* ! and braves my utmost vengeance.

“ Now,” continued she, looking earnestly on the inanimate victim of guilt and treachery ; “ *now* you see me for the
last

last time; I have exposed the villain, I pity you, and abhor myself."

Still the unhappy Madame Bruyere (for we shall drop the name of Marchioness, as *she did*) spoke not, moved not; her eyes were open, she seemed to listen, but without any emotion whatever.

The Countess, base as she was, felt shocked; she poured some drops down her throat, they produced a general trembling, and then some deep-drawn sighs. "Recover yourself," said the Countess, "I ask not your forgiveness, there are some actions too atrocious for pardon, and I confess that I have deserved to suffer, but not from an ungrateful villain, who has made me the tool of his abominable vices. *You*," continued she, "have nothing wherewith to reproach yourself; you are innocent of intentional guilt, would I were so too! but revenge is yet left, and I will enjoy it. Adieu," cried she, rising, "now, and for ever"——

"Stay, stop," said the injured lady, with a fixed wildness of look, "tell me if
my

my wronged husband lives—where, oh! where is he? Say but *that*, and I will crawl on my knees to receive his forgiveness, and then sink in quiet to my grave.”

The look, the impressive tone of voice, that accompanied these few words, pierced the hitherto callous heart of the guilty Countess; for the first time in her life she felt the stings of remorse, and the bitterness of self-reproach. Tears, that really sprung from her bosom, long since strangers to her deceptive mind, burst in torrents from her eyes—she sunk at the feet of the unhappy woman she had wronged.

“Oh!” cried she, “at this moment I feel how awful is virtue, how detestable is vice! See how low it has reduced me! Would to heaven I could repair the injuries I have done you; alas! all I can tell you is, that he has been carried to the Inquisition: a false accusation has delivered him up to that merciless tribunal, and I fear if he yet lives ’tis impossible you should ever see him more.”

Madame

Madame Bruyere clasped her hands in agony, repeating "Inquisition," in such a voice of unutterable sorrow, her eyes thrown up to heaven, not one tear to relieve the anguish of her heart, that the cruel woman, who had for months looked forward to this developement, that she might triumph over an object her conscious soul acknowledged to be her superior—this woman, now humbled by guilt, torn with unavailing remorse, and feeling herself the contemptible tool of a base, unprincipled man, now shrunk with horror at the crimes she had committed, and the sorrow she had planted in the bosom of innocence.

At this moment, when the fine eyes of Madame Bruyere were supplicating heaven, and guilt lay weeping at her feet, the Marquis entered—he stopt, he was struck dumb: the Countess saw him, she rose hastily—"Monster! here, come, complete your work—plunge your dagger into that guiltless bosom, and then destroy yourself and me!"

"You rave," said he, with a cool, insulting

fulsome smile; "nothing can be more admirable than this scene—but have a care, Madame—*remember* what you owe to *me* and to *yourself*; put an end to these flights; and if you wish to find me a friend, behave with decency, or leave the house. When this tragedy scene is over, I may return again."

The Countess was absolutely choaked with rage; Madame Bruyere had not changed her posture, though her eyes fell upon him as he was speaking; but the moment he quitted the room she fell into strong convulsions.

She was conveyed to her apartment, and for above two hours had repeated fits. At length they were reduced by proper remedies, and reason once more restored. The Countess never left the room, her contrition, though sudden, was sincere; every moment encreased a detestation of her own conduct, and pity for the victim so wantonly sacrificed to the basest machinations.

When she saw that the poor lady was
some-

something recovered, she desired the servant to withdraw. "Pity *me*, Madame," said she, "for I am a guilty, unworthy wretch; virtue may suffer, but in the extremest misery is *superior* to pity; is entitled to veneration and respect: even vice may hate, but must reverence it."

Madame Bruyere was struck, "What a sentiment!" said she, "Ah! what pains must you have taken to debase a mind capable of uttering it! One evil propensity has led to *your* ruin, and assisted to the destruction of an unfortunate family.—Think what *I am*! O, gracious heaven! a wife to two; one the dearest, best of men, and he in the Inquisition, tortured by savage, inhuman bigots! O misery! let me fly to share his pangs, and expiate my guilt by a voluntary death!"

She attempted to rise, but sunk back, weakened by the convulsions, and still more by the agonizing reflections that tortured her bosom. The Countess, no longer capable of supporting the cruel sight, the heartfelt sufferings of this respectable woman,

man, hastened to her own apartment, and prepared to leave a house she most bitterly regretted she had ever been prevailed upon to enter. But she resolved to make what poor atonement was in her power, by writing the injured lady the following letter:

FROM THE COUNTESS DULAY.

“ I write not, Madame, in the vain hope of palliating my crimes, or with a view to varnish them over by a display of superior wickedness in another—No, to you I have already acknowledged the baseness of my heart, and too ready acquiescence in the odious schemes of a vile, ungrateful man. I will even confess to you, that perhaps disappointment in *my* hopes and expectations, has no inconsiderable share in producing that repentance which a less callous heart would have felt, at seeing the deplorable state to which a most excellent woman was reduced, by the machinations of two detestable plotters.

“ I ar-

“ I arrogate no merit to myself, content that *you* should be benefited by all the reparation in *my* power to make. In doing this I add fresh wounds to your heart, but they are the last *I* can inflict, and may they be also the last *you* will ever feel !

“ 'Tis needless to repeat the progress of that passion the Marquis called love ; in gratifying that he sought a double satisfaction, which envy, ingratitude, and hatred inspired. His plan was to triumph over virtue, and reduce you to be the willing object of his pleasures ; to keep your unfortunate husband abroad, and intercept every letter ; and should despair and anxiety cause Monsieur Bruyere to return, his servant, who was a constant spy, was to have detained him on the road, that proper notice might have reached the Marquis, who would have taken care to have had him instantly arrested, as a man whose life was forfeited to the laws of his country.

“ The letters on both sides were intercepted after the first, and poor Monsieur

Bruyere received such answers from the Marquis as were calculated to deceive him into a false tranquillity.

“ Your conduct, so firm, so proper, disconcerted all our schemes ; to subdue virtue founded upon principle and goodness, was found to be a fruitless expectation ; other measures were to be adopted ; and the false report of your husband’s death, the progressive plans to compel you into a marriage, that being illegal, must at one time or other cover you with confusion and sorrow. This cruel, this base plot, with the deepest contrition I confess, *was all my own.*

“ After the completion of our schemes, the Marquis was not perfectly easy, lest the servant he trusted should betray him, or that Monsieur Bruyere might suddenly return ; to make sure work therefore, he wrote to one of the officers belonging to the Inquisition, whose character he well knew, and described your unfortunate husband as a Protestant, a banished man, and now a spy at the court of Portugal.

“ This

" This letter was sent off the day previous to your marriage; he doubted not of its effects to procure him ease, nor did he mistake, for in a short time he received a letter from his servant, who was not in this plot, that Monsieur Bruyere had been suddenly seized on by officers of the Inquisition, and was dragged away to that horrid prison, without being permitted to write, or secure a single paper. He added, that this event, so unexpected, rendered him incapable of judging what measures he ought to take, but that he should remain on the spot until he received fresh instructions.

" The Marquis was now perfectly easy, but not choosing to depend on the integrity of a servant well acquainted with all his former plans, he wrote, and commanded him to stay at Lisbon, for that in a few months it was his design to bring over his family and settle there.

" You must have observed, Madame, the gradual decline of that passion once so violent; the wretch could not live without

variety, yet had given me hopes, that when it suited him to develope the mystery to which you had been a victim, you might retire to a monastery, and *I* should command at the castle. I must now unfold to you a design not less cruel than his former ones.

“ Your beauteous children, when once they are torn from your protecting arms, return no more to the world. Henrietta will be placed in a convent of the strictest order, Henry will be sent to a college of Jesuits. He has already drawn up a memorial to the Queen Regent and Cardinal Richelieu, praying, ‘ that those children of Protestant parents, may be consecrated to the church; and that he is willing, from a regard to their salvation, to pay whatever expence may be deemed necessary for their admission for life into the holy societies, where they may be secluded from the temptations of the world, and preserved from the dangerous tenets of their parents.’ There is no doubt but this petition will readily be accorded to, and

and the danger is near at hand. I am convinced his treatment of you, and hasty proceedings with respect to yourself and children, originate from the mad passion he has conceived for that despicable girl Corthouse; to *her* we are all sacrificed; but he ought to know *me*, and that I am not of a disposition to be trampled upon, or insulted with impunity.

“ Without the least delay, Madāme, suspend your grief and indignation, and hasten to preserve your children. I have no asylum to offer them, would to heaven I had; but get them out of the castle before to-morrow night, or you lose them for ever!”

“ What is become of Philip? Have you no friend to whose care you can entrust them? If not, escape with them yourself to Salines, and go to the convent of Benedictines, the abbess is famous for her benevolence, boldly claim her protection; he must prove his right to force you from thence, and procure an order from court, before she will give you up. But

be careful to secure your jewels, and what property you have : convents rarely receive an incumbrance ; money is a passport there as well as in the world.

“ If you can support the sight of one who has thus acknowledged her unpardonable crimes, if you think my advice or assistance can befriend you, come to me instantly, in two hours I shall leave the castle ; your base betrayer is absent, and will not return for some hours : but if you hate, abhor me, 'tis no more than I deserve ; your detestation of my conduct is not, cannot be greater than I feel on a retrospection of my past life ; my contrition, though it may appear too sudden to be depended upon, is not the less sincere respecting *you* ; and whatever motives have produced it, I wish to make all the reparation I can. And let this console you, Madame, however great and irreparable the evils you suffer, they are not aggravated by self-reproach. *You* are the *innocent* victim to the crimes of others. How great their condemnation !

“ MARIA DULAY.”

The

The mind of Madame Bruyere had been worked up to that degree of misery, that it seemed incapable of feeling superior anguish; but when she had perused this letter, she was convinced there are scarce any afflictions we suffer but what are capable of aggravation. Her children to be taken from her, and shut up for ever! No language can paint the agonies she felt; the fears of the mother for a while suspended the feelings of the wife, and in an instant she recollected Janette, the young friend of Philip.

Starting up, she ordered her to be called, and she immediately attended.—

“Janette,” said the poor agitated lady, “you know Philip.” “O, the best creature in the world; I owe my life to him my lady.” “Are you willing to serve me?” “Upon my knees, by night and by day, if your ladyship will trust me.”

“Can you contrive to see Philip this day, more than my life depends upon it?”

“Holy Virgin!” cried Janette, “I would risk a hundred lives to preserve that: yes,

Madame, I will see him before I eat my dinner." "Well, then, come to me an hour hence, and I will give you instructions." She wrote the following short note to the Countess, and sent it by the girl;

"I *pity* you, Madame, I hope that I *forgive* you; the important services you have rendered me by your letter entitles you to both; but I have not the courage to see you. I thank you for mentioning the convent to me, possibly I may profit by your information. My heart is too much agitated for words, but my wishes and prayers are, that henceforth you may deserve *your own* esteem, by a sincere repentance of the past, and a decided, fixed resolution to avoid error in future.

"May heaven forgive and bless you; misery like mine admits of no relief; *you* have been the instrument to inflict it, *my* own weakness seconded your schemes, and I bear the punishment with humble submission. Adieu, Madame, persevere in
your

your repentance, and you may obtain peace in your last hours.

—had said this; —“LOUISA BRUYERE.”

—Having sent off this note, Madame

prepared, with astonishing resolution, to

execute the plan she had formed to save

her children; most fortunately when Mon-

sieur Bruyere was disposing of his plate

and trinkets, *he* had too much delicacy to

ask the sacrifice of his lady's jewels; *she*

was so engrossed by sorrow and despair, she

had never thought of them; and since

her residence in the castle, she had dressed

in the plainest and most simple style pos-

sible.

—

On her marriage the Marquis had pre-

sented her with some ornaments; she ac-

cepted, but had never worn them, nor ever

mentioned to him that she had any of her

own, as she reserved them for Henrietta.

A sum of money, the wreck of their for-

tune, was also in her possession; whether

forgetfulness, or the idea that it was too

trifling to be of any consequence, in-

fluenced

fluenced the Marquis, cannot be known, but 'tis certain he had never asked her any questions relative to it; and she had given him credit for delicacy and generosity in his forbearance. She now returned thanks to heaven that she had the means to procure an asylum for herself, and those objects much dearer to her; she packed every thing up in a small compass; and having written a note to Philip, impatiently expected Janette, who in a short time came to her with joy in her looks.

"The Marquis, Madame, has sent word he dines out, and does not return till evening; now I can go to Philip immediately."

"Indeed!" said Madame Bruyere, then fly, and bid him meet me at the little gate this evening, just as it grows dusk—do not return without seeing him." The girl quickly departed, and soon after Madame hearing the noise of a carriage, supposed it to be, what it really was, the Countess leaving the castle; before she had time to consider on the nature of that

that woman's conduct, Janette ran into the room—"Pardon me, my Lady, but I came back to tell you that the Countess is gone away, and John who came back from the Marquis attended her to the carriage; so said she, "Tell your master he is a villain, and that he may dread my revenge."

"John laughed when she was gone—"Now I shall carry good news," said he, "I am going again to our Marquis, he will rejoice at her departure; I wonder she went alone though, but I am sure *she* can do him no mischief." So John went away, and you see, my Lady, he only came back for a spy." "'Tis of no consequence to me," answered Madame; "pray hasten on your errand."

The girl had no sooner left the room, than Madame Bruyere, oppressed by the shocking recollection of the events of that day, and the horrid contents of the letter, began to feel her spirits fail; and was apprehensive of being ill; she tottered into the room where her children were employed in studying their morning lessons, and hav-

ing ordered the servant to get her some drops, their tender caresses produced a flood of tears, that in some measure afforded a temporary relief; but when she considered these beloved children were on the brink of being torn from her; if her schemes should fail, or they be discovered before they were in a place of security: Alas! what then must be the consequence? how unavailing her prayers and tears, how powerless to procure them any redress, when the Marquis could influence those against her, who were already prejudiced by the enemies of their father!

She saw their fate hung on the balance, and in a few hours, perhaps, her evil genius might turn the scale against them.

She wept, embraced, and implored the protection of Heaven for these unfortunate children. They were deeply afflicted at her sorrow: "Ah! Mamma," said Henry, "you forget it is my birth-day, I am nine years old; I should not have remembered it, had not Louison mentioned the day of the month; do not weep to-day, my dear Mamma,

Mamma, you used to wish me joy, if I cannot have *joy*, don't let me see *you* unhappy."

She clasped him to her bosom, unable just then to articulate a word—"My dear Henry," said his lovely sister, "don't you know that we are soon going from Mamma, I dare say she weeps for that, though 'tis for our good, yet I know that I have shed tears about it; only that Mamma loves us so well, she would not part with us, I am sure, but to make us wiser and better."

"True, my dearest girl," replied the afflicted mother; "Heaven send you, my darling boy, many, many happy years; I had, indeed, forgotten that this was a day so often remembered with delight and gratitude." She paused, bitter recollection struck forcibly upon her mind, and she found that hurry and exertion were absolutely requisite to support her under the accumulation of misery that had been so unsparingly heaped upon her: she rejoiced, however, that the Marquis did not return
to

to dinner ; to have met him until she had succeeded in the plan on which more than her life depended, would have been death to her, and perhaps in its consequences might have frustrated every hope of preserving her children.

They, unconscious of the distraction of her mind, sought to please and amuse her by repeating their lessons. Alas ! she attended not, a thousand perplexing ideas disturbed her bosom ; when suddenly it occurred to her, that by making a present to the servants for the purpose of drinking the health of her dear boy, she should be freed from all impertinent observation that evening, and at liberty to pursue her schemes without interruption. Pursuing this thought, she called the woman appointed by the Marquis to attend them, and giving her money for herself and the others, said, she would take charge of the children for the evening, and desired they would remember it was Henry's birth-day. She ordered a chicken in her own apartment, and bid the servant bring the children

dren there when she went to her own dinner: She then returned to her room, made up a parcel of their clothes, and with astonishing fortitude, prepared every necessary for their accommodation, and for the security of her own little property. When this arrangement was made, she began to consider whether she should accompany her children, or trust them to Philip. How could she meet the monster, whose villany had overwhelmed with misery the friend who had confided in his honour? Who had entailed on her never-ending sorrow, reproach and shame.

After a severe conflict, she determined once more to endure the horror of his presence, to upbraid him with his atrocious crimes, and speak daggers to his heart, if it was not enclosed by a wall of adamant.

To think, was distraction; she was again compelled to turn her thoughts from herself, and consider only for her children and Philip. The malice of their enemy would induce

induce him to seek for them, she had no doubt, and there was neither time nor opportunity to implore the protection of the Convent ; the first moment, therefore, that she projected their removal, a place of safety had darted into her mind.

That cavern, near the hermit's cell, which the Marquis had told her no one had the courage to enter, would be a sure asylum. The cell itself was so situated, that no one could approach it without being perceived at some distance through the trees, though the building was impervious to the view of others 'till very near to it ; and then the passage through to the other apartment which led to the cave would always give time for flying from observation.

Philip had casually mentioned to her, that he had been to view this romantic place, from hearing it talked of at table, and therefore he would have no difficulty in taking the children to it—the only obstacle was, how to procure food, for conveniences for sleeping ; he could not leave them, and there was no time to make
such

such preparations for their accommodation as seemed absolutely necessary.

After much deliberation, she found something must be risked, she must go with them at once, or entrust another; she preferred the first, and resolved to leave the house with them.

The appearance of Janette with a letter, was a relief to her distracted thoughts; her faithful servant assured her of his punctuality and fidelity; he approved of the hermit's cell, and said he would go there immediately, and take a few necessaries, such as might be unobserved; and that if she would confide in Janette, he was persuaded she would serve her faithfully, and by her endeavours, many comforts might be procured they must otherwise want.

This letter determined Madame Bruyere to be perfectly unreserved to the girl, except in naming the intended place of concealment: she told her the diabolical designs of the Marquis against her children, and that his treatment of her, and them, had determined her to fly the castle—she
was

was poor, she said, and incapable of offering her any terms she might expect for her services, and had nothing to look forward to but dangers and difficulties: had her situation been better, she would gladly have taken Janette with her.

“O, my lady,” said she, falling at her feet, “you have enough for me, indeed you have; if you are poor, or choose to be poor, by leaving your own castle, can I want any thing but the fragments of what you leave? A little will serve me, I will work my fingers to bone for such a good lady, and lay down my life to oblige Mr. Philip, who saved it by his charity. O, take me, Madame, pray do, in a castle, or in a cottage, ’tis the same to me.”

“Well, Janette,” answered Madame Bruyere, “after I have seen Philip this evening, you shall have my answer; in the mean time believe that I highly regard this proof of your affection.” “And I,” cried Janette, “take the Holy Virgin to witness, that I will serve you faithfully, whether in a palace, or a prison.”

“Ah!”

“ Ah !” cried Madame, when alone, “ how are the gifts of Nature disgraced by the depravity of the mind ! Birth and titles, adventitious claims to respect, how frequently rendered contemptible, how often disgraced and covered with ignominy, by the crimes and vices of their possessors ! The Marquis and Countess, elevated by their rank in society, how truly inferior in virtue to my Philip and this poor Janette. Alas ! involuntarily, a criminal myself, yet by my weakness and impatience, doubting the interposition of Heaven to save my children, and arrogating to myself that power which I ought to have left wholly to the wise designs of Providence ; I am punished, and humbled to the dust for my presumption. An adulteress ! Oh, Heaven, defend me—that thought leads to madness !” She started from her seat ; a servant came to lay the cloth, it was three hours beyond the usual hour of dining, but time had passed unheeded, she had not thought of eating ;

the servant thought it necessary to make an apology.

“The cook, Madame, was sent for by our master, to Salines, to dress a dinner there, she left no directions, and we supposed would return, or that Antoine, who assists in the kitchen, would come to prepare your’s; neither have come, and no one would take upon them to cook, so that Janette, the under chamber-maid, is broiling a chicken, and we hope your ladyship will pardon us, as we have received orders only to speak to the house-keeper.”

“And pray,” said Madame, “why was she not applied to?” “She was, Madame, but, she said—” the man stopt.—“What did she say?” “That, as the Marquis dined out, and the Countess was gone, she should give no orders at all; so I got the chicken unknown to her, and Janette is dressing it.”

“Very well, I thank you:” the man withdrew, and this fresh insult proved that the Marquis did not wish to observe any terms with her, and that the house-keeper
and

and cook must have received their instructions. She now no longer hesitated, even the desire of pouring forth her wrongs to make him tremble, now vanished, for to make such a man *feel*, was a fruitless hope, but she would write.

She seated herself immediately under the impression of every crime he had committed; her thoughts and pen flew rapidly, the portrait she drew of him, and the recital of his barbarous, ungrateful, and wicked actions, wanted no additional colouring to strike a heart not hardened into steel, with horror and despair. She concluded with telling him she had found a friend and protector for herself and children, and that a day would yet arrive, when his callous soul would tremble before those he had so basely wronged.

Having finished her letter, while for some time her chicken had waited till it was cold; she tried to eat, but could not swallow more than a mouthful of bread and a glass of wine. Janette made an excuse to step up to her—"Your present to the servants, Madame, will be done
justice

justice to; I may attend you in the evening without being missed, for I am of no consequence among them." Madame Bruyere gave her a parcel, "Convey that, now, if possible, among the shrubs close to the bridge, and if you are unperceived, come for another." The girl readily obeyed, and was fortunate enough to carry all the bundles, and deposit them safely. They had then a long conversation, Janette received every instruction with respect, and confidence of succeeding in her part of the business.

She returned to the other domestics; "Our lady above seems very cross," said she, "she ordered me out of her room just now, and bid me say she wanted none of our attendance, that she should keep the children with her this night, and required nothing more than candles in her dressing-room when it grew dark; she looks very grieved and cross."

"Aye, that's because she had like to have had no dinner," returned one of the men; "what the devil's the matter, I don't

don't know, but there's some cross work going on between the Marquis and her."

"Why, to be sure," said the woman who attended on her and the children, "'tis enough to make any mother grieve, to part with such sweet creatures; I hope she'll stand her ground yet, and not let them go." "O, for the matter of that," answered another, "if master says it, he'll do it, no one can turn him, I believe." The conversation changed, and Janette succeeded in keeping any of them from attending her lady.

When the hour approached for Madame Bruyere to meet Philip, with a palpitating heart she took her children by the hand, and descended unseen into the garden; they observed how greatly she was agitated, and looked mournfully at each other, but ventured not to speak, lest they should vex their dear mamma; though they wondered at walking so late in the garden. When they came to the bridge, a significant "hem" gave Madame to know her servant was in waiting; she

she unlocked the gate, and Philip stood before them, the children gave a cry of joy, and clung about him; their mother required their silence, and telling him where the bundles were deposited, he soon found and conveyed them into the coppice in a safe place.

When that was completed, she told him “*She* had determined to accompany him, that she first thought to have braved the Marquis, after her children were safe; but reflection had taught her to believe him capable of any wickedness towards gratifying his passions; and malice might prompt him to confine her; added to which, the poor children would be miserable from her.”

“We have no time to lose,” replied Philip, “we shall hardly get through the copse before it will be dark, the evening is gloomy, and the moon, though near full, will give but a dull light, I doubt; and your clothes, my lady, I fear—” “O,” cried she, “in such a bundle there is a long cloak and hood of Janette’s, I shall throw

throw that over me." This was immediately done; the children were all astonishment, yet still silent, 'till Madame Bruyere locked the gate, and threw the key into the rivulet, then taking their hands, "Come, my dear children, you return no more to the castle, nor shall you be separated from me; ask no questions, but walk as stoutly as you can, for you have a pretty long way to go."

"O," they both cried, "that's nothing, if we are to be always with our mamma."

Not another word was spoken, Philip had taken what he could carry, little

Henry would take charge of a light bundle, and the others were in a corner covered with underwood, which he proposed fetching in the morning.

It was really dark when they had cleared the coppice, the moon now and then emerged from behind the heavy clouds, but was again presently enveloped by others; yet however uncomfortable this was, it had one advantage, the gloom of the evening was not likely to invite any one abroad.

nor did they meet a single being in their way to the mountain.

When they began to ascend through the narrow and rugged path-way, furrounded by the mountain, the sides covered with thick brush wood, and nothing visible but the lowering sky, the heart of Madame Bruyere beat quick, her courage failed—"Heaven protect us!" cried she, mentally, "for here we are in danger of meeting banditti, I fear." The poor children grew tired, but neither complained; "Was not their mamma with them, and did she complain?" Such were the thoughts of both, and they were ashamed to express what they felt.

At length they came to a turning where some pieces of rock lay on one side—"Here," said Madame, "the children shall rest, poor things, I am sure they are fatigued." "Will you sit down?" asked Henrietta. "Yes, my love." "Then, I will gladly do so too; but indeed, mamma, I will never complain, if you can bear

climbing

climbing this steep ugly hill, I am sure I can."

"Mamma," said Henry, "may I ask if we are near to the top?" "Above half way, my dear boy, and then you will be at the end of your journey." "Indeed!" exclaimed he, in a joyful tone, "I did not expect that; O, I shall think nothing of the rest of the hill, I thought we were to travel thus all night."

Madame Bruyere was incapable of answering him; while her body shared the fatigues of her mind, she bore up with fortitude, but the moment she was seated, and looked round on the dreary prospect, and reflected that they were now become wanderers, without a home or a friend to help them, her heart sickened, and it was with difficulty she could keep herself from fainting.

She was obliged to rest longer than she had intended, before she could recover herself to move; Henry was on his feet, "O, how I long to be at the top of this mountain; I should soon be there if I was
F 2 alone;

alone; I wish the path was broad enough for me to support you, mamma." "You support," cried Henrietta, I wonder how." "Why, mamma could lean on my shoulder, it would help her better than a stick, and I should bear her weight with pleasure if it gave her ease." "No doubt," replied Henrietta, "and so would I do too, I wonder why they make such narrow paths that one can't help each other."

This little dialogue changed the current of ideas that occupied the mind of Madame Bruyere, and rising, "I thank you, my dear children, for your kind wishes," said she, "I feel more for you than for myself, but a little patience and resolution will carry us through very shortly."

They resumed their walk, and at length arrived at the top; the moon, which had been long struggling with the clouds, seemed to have forced her way through them, and at this time darted her bright beams over the mountain; they turned into the green path that led to the hermitage, and Philip, desiring them to stop, produced

produced a piece of steel and a flint, with which he struck light, and lighting a flambeau he had provided, led them into the hermitage.

“ Here,” said Madame Bruyere, “ we may rest I hope in safety, ’till the search that may be made after us shall be over.” The children were delighted with the novelty of a place they had often heard of, and had been promised they should see, but for some time past the thoughts of every one at the castle had been differently employed. They were never weary of admiring the beauties around them, ’till Philip produced some bread, grapes, figs and wine: “ You have been very provident, my kind friend,” said Madame Bruyere, with a faint smile; “ is it possible that you have already been here this afternoon?” “ Most fortunately, Madame, I got a nimble-footed mule that brought me near half way up the mountain; I took care to load her pretty well, but alas! Madame, I had neither time nor power to procure any bedding, and I am

forry to add that the cane chairs and couch that were here have been removed, though I never heard a word about it in the castle, and can't think when or by whom it was done."

"Good God!" exclaimed Madame, "what then will become of my poor children; no bed, not even that couch which I depended upon for them; ah! Philip, what a wild scheme is this!" "Dear Mamma," said Henry, "don't grieve for us; how often have you told us there are thousands of unhappy persons who have neither a bed nor a home, perhaps no dear friend; *you are with us*, and I dare say we can sleep on this floor in our clothes." "O, yes," cried Henrietta, "don't vex yourself about a bed, we can sleep here; I protest I am so tired, that were I to lye down I should be asleep presently."

The poor lady embraced them with streaming eyes; "how unfortunate, that those things in the next room should be removed; but," said she with a deep sigh,

"to

“to grieve or repine now avails not, we must do the best we can.”

Philip unpacked his bundles that he had brought previous to their coming, two coats, and some flannel waistcoats, with a large great coat, he thought might defend them from the cold damp of the stones, and he would kindle a good fire. “But where is my mamma to sleep?” cried Henry; “do you think Philip I will take all this covering, and leave her to bear the cold? No, indeed, I am a boy, I can sit by the fire with you: mamma has often read to me, and told me of what soldiers and sailors suffer; perhaps I may be one of those by and by, therefore ’tis right I should learn a little how to bear hardships: mamma and Henrietta shall have the clothes, I will sit with you Philip.”

“My dear, my noble boy,” cried the weeping mother, “your generous affection is dear to my heart, but my Henry has not been accustomed to dispute my will, and when I tell you that it will make me happy to see you sleep comfortable,

and also that I have many things to consult about and settle with Philip, I am sure you will comply with my wishes."

"If you *order* me to take the covering, to be sure, mamma, I must obey you, for I always mind your commands, or else I should have asked a hundred times this evening why we all stole away from the castle, and were brought here, or if any one was going to do us a mischief; but you said, 'ask no questions,' and so I obeyed, though I have longed every moment to ask a great many."

"'Tis very natural, my dear," answered his mother, "at your age, you must make observations, and of course wish for information; to-morrow I will give you my reasons for leaving the castle; but now eat your fruit, and we will spread the clothes on each side of the fire for you and your dear sister."

Busied in this employment, tenderly watching her children, and concerting her future plans with her faithful Philip, we will

will leave Madame Bruyere, and look back on the Marquis.

He had been disconcerted on seeing the Countess kneeling to Madame Bruyere, or as he then called her, the Marchioness; but believing it impossible that a woman would criminate herself, and avow such atrocious crimes as she had been accessory to, he supposed it a mere temporary fit of penitence that would not carry her beyond the bounds of prudence; and if the worst happened, and she discovered all, why it was only anticipating him, and he could place the Marchioness in a convent, or confine her to a distant part of his castle, if he liked.

Thus reconciling his mind he repaired to his new charmer, and was easily persuaded to pass the day with her, that he might see the violent Countess no more, conscious of his ingratitude to her also, for he had absolutely refused to give her the sum of money he had lavishly promised for her assistance in his vile plots. But a new object in his heart, he as easily forgot

his engagements with her, as those he had entered into with the woman once so dear to him. And when the Countess, enraged at his present passion, demanded the sums she was entitled to, he refused her without any ceremony, and bore the torrent of her reproaches, and threats of her revenge, with perfect indifference.

He wished for her absence, and was not sorry she had sought this quarrel which was productive of her removal, nor did he wish to behold her again.

His favourite servant was ordered to watch the manœuvres at the castle, and bring him word if she left it, or if she went alone. From the servant's report, that the Countess did go alone, that the Marchioness did not take leave of her, and that the latter had afterwards given money to the servants to drink Henry's health, he concluded the lady had been wise in her anger; and though she might have acknowledged some things in her own disfavour to criminate him, yet that she had kept the

the grand secret, or the Marchioness would never have been so composed.

The cook he had sent for to dress one or two particular dishes his Mademoiselle was fond of, and when the housekeeper asked, who was to dress her lady's dinner, John replied, "Never mind, she won't have many dinners here I believe." This was enough for *that* lady, who was so perfectly satisfied with her own situation, that she made it always to accord with her master's wishes; and she concluded a wife was no more than a mistress, when she was no longer beloved or respected by the master; nor was this prudent woman singular in her opinions, since it is an inviolable rule, that where the master of a family ceases to respect those he is connected with, the generality of servants follow the example, are careless in their duties, and impertinent in their behaviour.

The Marquis, who every hour grew more infatuated with the artful Corthouse, determined, as soon as he had disposed of the children, to encourage an open rupture

with the mother, that a proposal of separation might come from her, and then, with a trifling annuity, he should get rid of her altogether. Having no intention ever to marry, he thought she might retain the empty name of wife, and the title of Marchioness, which he should never confer on another. He returned to the castle late at night, this project full in his head, and the image of Mademoiselle in his heart.

The next morning, when his servant attended to dress him, he said "it was strange the Marchioness was not out of her room yet; she had taken the children, and kept them with her all night, another odd thing; and Louison had been twice at the door this morning, but could not hear any one stirring."

The Marquis thought there *was* something odd in it too, and therefore, when he was dressed, he ordered Louison to knock loudly at the door.---This was done, and repeated, to no purpose: they saw the key was taken out of the lock,

and then he commanded John to burst open the door, this was quickly performed, and the room found empty, but being the dressing-room, they passed into the bed-chamber; the two beds were untouched, and it was now beyond a doubt that the Marchioness and her children were gone. A letter was upon the dressing-table, which the Marquis caught up, and saw it was addressed to him. He dismissed the servants for the present, and sat down to peruse the letter.

The particular contents it will be unnecessary to repeat; she recapitulated all the wrongs she had endured, all the base and atrocious actions he had been guilty of, from that turpitude of soul which caused him to hate and destroy his benefactor and friend, because he had obliged him too much, and had such large claims on his gratitude.

She bid him tremble for the consequences of his crimes, both in this world and the next; she assured him vengeance would overtake him, for that, however
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the wicked might triumph in the success of their machinations for a time, there was a Just and Almighty Ruler of the world, whose piercing eye discerned every action, every purpose of the heart, and who never failed to bestow righteous judgment and severe retribution. *Ingratitude* was the sin that hurled the offending angels from Heaven, and was of that magnitude, even in this world, that where it resided in the heart, *no one virtue* could inhabit there.

She concluded with telling him, that though he had entailed endless misery upon her, and blasted every hope and prospect of comfort, the duty she owed to her unfortunate children required her to struggle against the tide of overwhelming sorrow that surrounded her, and to accept the assistance of a friend, to preserve them from his base designs.

Such were the heads of what she had written in the bitterness of grief and despair. The Marquis felt a trembling through his veins as he proceeded, cold
shoot-

shootings pierced his heart, and hardly sensible of what he was doing, he read it twice over; then flinging down the letter—" 'Tis true," said he, " I have treated this woman cursed ill, but 'tis past, and her own peevish virtue was the cause; had she acted more wisely, like a woman of the world, I might have been a friend to her and her family—she might have secured a good settlement:—Why then do I feel thus shocked at the upbraidings or prognostics of ills that she utters in malice; to what purpose have we power and riches, if not to gratify our desires, and make them subservient to our happiness?"

Roused from his transient fit of remorse, he sought to shake off the impression made on his features by the letter, and to consider where, or to whom, she could have removed.

She was so entirely unknown in that country, so much a stranger to the environs of the castle, that he concluded there was no possible resource for her but with
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the *Countess*, and that *her* malice and desire of revenge had influenced her to become the protector of the *Marchioness* and her children. Simple wretches! thought he, what can they attempt against me?—Without money or friends, who will engage in the cause of a *woman* against a man of my rank and fortune?

Well might he ask this; for who, indeed, will compassionate the fatherless and oppressed—who will assert *their* rights, or shield them from the injustice and persecutions of the opul^{ent}? Alas! where is that being to be found, that will disinterestedly plead the cause of the poor unfortunate woman, suffering under every accumulating distress from unfeeling prosperity and usurious avarice, when the blessings of a grateful heart is *all* she can promise for the exertion of their talents?

Well might the Marquis exult in his security; the passions of mankind have been the same in all ages, and self-interest the governing principle, to which are often sacrificed virtue, honour, and every noble senti-

sentiment that should dignify human nature; while the unfortunate being who has only merit and patient suffering to recommend him, sinks, humbled to the dust, and with a bleeding heart for the woes of others tenderly connected with him, perishes in obscurity, unsought, and unregarded!

The mean, exulting, self-consequence of the Marquis, has carried me from my narrative, by rousing those feelings which every generous bosom must experience against the prosperous proud, whose vices are shielded from punishment, who are too callous to be wounded by contempt, and too great to value censure.

The Marquis soon shook off temporary disquietude; and from having nothing to fear from such impotent enemies, he congratulated himself on having so cheaply got rid of them all. "Now," said he, "my beloved girl shall come home, and reign here; now I shall enjoy the sweets of love free from reproaches or reluctance: no more fierce glances from one, or sorrowing

rowing looks from the other.—O, my dear creatures! you never obliged me so heartily as by this voluntary secession from your rights and privileges.”

He proceeded to examine the cabinet and drawers of his quondam lady, and, on inspection, was not a little pleased to find that she had left the jewels and clothes he had given her, nothing was taken but what had been her own property before she came to the castle. He was now confirmed in his belief that she was with the Countess, and that her clothes had been concealed in that lady's trunks. He concluded some carriage had waited at a small distance from the castle, and that she and her children had passed out unobserved while the servants were partaking of her present.

Perfectly reconciled to the event, he had no thoughts of pursuing them, but ordered a carriage, for the purpose of bringing home his present favourite, who was now to be the dispenser of love and happiness.

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That evening he returned with the lady; she had no troublesome qualms about reputation or slander, she could look disdain on the peasantry of the neighbourhood, from her handsome carriage; and there were persons at Salines, who lived in tolerable decency, and with unimpeached characters, who, from a fondness of visiting a great man, and being admitted at a splendid table, she had no doubt would court her society, when her consequence was established.

Under these flattering ideas, she took possession of the apartments that had been appropriated to Madame Bruyere, of her jewels, trinkets, and other presents, with an insulting joy that shocked the servants who attended, and who made their report in the kitchen not at all to her advantage.

Janette, who had been a quiet, but wondering spectator of the several occurrences of the day, when she found neither enquiry nor search was made after her lady, though she would have been frightened at such a proceeding, yet was very much

much provoked at the indifference of the Marquis; and it seemed equally a matter of surprise to most part of the family, who were attached to their lady by her amiable and condescending manners.

Her's was an unadulterated heart; she had not learnt the courtly art of treating her inferiors with contempt, as if they were a different order of beings; she never forgot the respect due to herself, but she was always gracious to those who served and seemed desirous of obliging her: hence her unaccountable departure from the castle, was a matter of general regret to all who had not the honour of their master's confidence.

When the bold, assuming Mademoiselle was declared the mistress, by having possession of the lady's apartments, and by the general order given by the Marquis for them all to observe the commands of *that lady*, they were struck with the glaring impropriety of her appearance, and disgusted with her assurance, and want of feeling,

feeling, in taking such early possession of her new situation.

Janette saw she might make what preparations she pleased for leaving the castle, yet waited to see Philip early the following morning in the coppice, that she might know of their safety, and whether any fresh instructions were to be given to her.

At the dawn of day she arose, and went to the bridge; she spoke, no one answered, and she grew very uneasy, forgetting that he had upwards of two miles to walk. She had waited above half an hour, when her name, softly pronounced, dispelled her fears; she unlocked the gate, and was with him in an instant, though his appearance would have startled her, had not his voice assured her of his identity.

That faithful servant, though denied by his lady a second interview, yet resolved to hover round the castle, and sometimes visit the copse, to have a look at her; he had therefore been to Salines very early the preceding day, and purchased a black wig, and a wood-cutter's dress and imple-
ments,

ments, to disguise his person from observation; and had not been very long returned before Janette came to him from her lady, for he had avoided the high road, and had wrapped himself in a great coat, lest he should meet the Marquis, or any of the servants. This disguise was now most useful, and was so effectual, that Janette only knew him by his voice.

She acquainted him with every transaction in the castle; and when honest Philip heard of the quick arrival of Mademoiselle, he stamped with rage, giving her and the Marquis very heartily to the Devil.

He told her of the wretched manner in which the poor lady had passed the night, without sleep, or a bed to lie upon, and the dear children too on the cold stones; adding, "I am now going to Salines to purchase some blankets, and other things, fit for a cottager, for so my lady will have it, poor soul.—Ah! she need not be so fearful, they don't want to find her it seems; however, she thinks you had best tell the housekeeper the work is too hard

for you, and desire she will get another in your room; every other day I will come here to meet you, and can take some of your clothes, so as to lighten your bundle when you leave the house: meantime, get all the intelligence you can." They soon parted, and Janette returned to the house undiscovered; and as it rarely happened any of the servants went through the coppice, she kept possession of the key.

Philip fortunately bought his necessaries, and took them on a mule, as he gave out, to his cottage, but hid them in the brushwood on the side of the hill, not being able to convey them to the hermitage under two or three trips. He returned the mule where he had borrowed it, and, with some fatigue, carried all his purchases safe to his lady.

Madame Bruyere was scarcely able to thank him for his diligence; she found herself very ill; indignation, terror, and anxiety for her children, had supported her spirits, and caused her to go through all the hurrying events of the preceding day,

day, without being sensible of the extraordinary exertions she had made. But when her tired children lay extended on the floor, locked in a sweet sleep; when the solemn hour of midnight arrived, the wind whistling in hollow murmurs through the trees; and she considered herself as one cut off from society, persecuted, wronged, friendless, and a wanderer; reflecting, above all, on that supreme misery of having been deceived into a criminal intimacy with the most abandoned of men, while her beloved and unfortunate husband was subjected to the tortures of that horrid tribunal the inquisition; ah! what language can describe, what pen delineate, the horrors that overpowered a mind of exquisite sensibility, a mind pure and spotless as an angel's!

Her brain grew too weak to support the contemplation of her uncommon wretchedness, she felt a burning fever creeping through her veins, and an intense pain in her head rendered her almost senseless when Philip returned; he saw she

was

was ill, but he knew not *how* ill: she laid herself down upon the first blanket he produced, he hoped sleep would relieve her, and made his several trips till he had brought up all his purchases.

He then busied himself in getting some refreshments; the children, now perfectly recovered from fatigue, and pleased with the novelty of the scene, were in the best spirits imaginable. Meantime, the poor lady was sensible that she had a bad fever coming on her, the event was uncertain, and she trembled for her children, not a human being was concerned for them. Philip, a man advanced in years, whose little savings would hardly afford proper comforts to his down-hill of life, was their only protector, friend, and support.— Dreadful idea!

Agonized with pain, apprehensive for her senses, she addressed their Heavenly Father, with heartfelt energy, to preserve those deserted, unfortunate orphans; to preserve *her* life, if necessary, for *their* welfare; though hateful to herself, yet

existence was precious and desirable, when attached to the support of those far dearer to her than life, and for whose sake alone she wished for length of days.

Heaven was gracious and benign, the prayers of the afflicted mother were heard—a goat that moment looked into the hermitage; Philip, just behind, caught it, and being a female, he drew her in and milked her: this was, indeed, a prize; and the next thing to be considered, was to secure her for their use. Behind the hermitage was a pretty large green mount, and, fastening the creature for the present, he went to work, drove some strong sticks into the earth, which he found round their dwelling, and by joining the cords which had tied his several bundles, he soon fixed her on that spot, with room enough to browse round for food.

This milk, so providentially obtained, was a great and salutary relief to Madame Bruyere; Philip, among other things, had brought some oranges for his “young gentry,” those were also of service to her; and

and most happily she dropt into a slumber, which, though attended with starts and restlessness, yet interrupted the tumults of her mind, and towards evening she found herself, beyond expectation, relieved from the disorder she dreaded.

Having returned thanks to Heaven for the ease she felt, she was now capable of attending to the intelligence Philip had not yet ventured to communicate, lest he should add to her illness. She heard him without any other emotion than encreased detestation for the man who had injured her; and, to the surprise of her faithful servant, expressed great satisfaction that his entire indifference to her fate would render it the more easy for her to proceed soon on the road towards Lisbon.

“Lisbon!” repeated he, with all the marks of extreme astonishment; “God bless you, my dear lady, what will you do in Lisbon, among strangers?” “And what am I to do *here* among *enemies*? Alas! Philip, powerful motives carry me there, which I will explain another time (the

children were sitting by her); do not question me further, *there* I am resolved to go, whatever may be the consequence. —I shall dispose of my jewels in some town we go through, and, in gathering all my trinkets together, find that I am richer than I supposed myself to be, enough, with frugality, to support us two or three years, and in that time Providence may dispose of us various ways."

"But, dear my lady, consider—to Lisbon!" "And why *not* to Lisbon?—Am I not a stranger in France, have I any relations, any friends, who feel for the distresses of a cruelly oppressed family?" "But, Madame, your husband, the Marquis, may not always——" "O, name him not," cried she, in an agony, at the word "*husband*;" from that detested wretch I would fly to the uttermost part of the globe!—To Lisbon I *will* go, were I sure to die on the road; all I ask of Heaven is to die *there*."

Philip was silenced, though why his lady should go to that place where his
unfor-

unfortunate master died, appeared very strange to him; or why she expressed so much horror when the Marquis was named; he was a very wicked gentleman, it was true, to be unfaithful to so beautiful and good a lady, but the years *he* had lived in the great world had taught him to know, it was not unusual for gentlemen to slight the most amiable wives, and subject themselves to the caprice and controul of the most worthless mistresses; and that sometimes gentlemen saw their errors to their cost, and returned repentant to the bosom of their families. Then, the Marquis had settled so handsomely on the children, and his lady was naturally so mild and forbearing: it was all a mystery to him, and he longed for a further explanation.

The accommodations Philip procured, by means of his disguise, were no more than absolute necessities, for Madame Bruyere was so weak, a lurking fever hanging on her nerves, and so incapable of travelling for some days, that she was obliged to expend more money than was

agreeable to the plan of economy she had laid down to observe; but it was requisite to recruit her strength for the many trials and fatigues she had yet to encounter.

She saw anxiety and curiosity depicted in the countenance of her faithful servant, but could she submit to the humiliation of confessing to him the infamous imposition that had degraded her into an involuntary criminal? for the present she found herself unequal to the task. Her dear children too, they looked with silent wonder; she saw their little expressive eyes turned on each other, when she prohibited naming the *detested* Marquis; she could only tell them, in general terms, that he had designed to have confined them within iron bars all their lives, and to prevent *that*, she had taken them away. This satisfied them, and called forth their tender gratitude to their dear mamma for saving them from such a terrible fate.

Two days were passed quietly in the hermitage, Madame gained but little strength, the agitations of her mind precluded

cluded that rest and peace essential to health; the following morning Philip was to meet Janette: but she had ceased to be interested in any events at the castle, since informed that she was not to be sought after. Philip, however, was more curious, he “longed to know what was a-doing,” he said, and therefore, before the early lark had poured forth her grateful song, he had walked through the blue mists that hung over the mountains, and arrived at the coppice, his new wig completely wetted by the dews of the morning.

It was now his turn to wait for Janette, which he did above a quarter of an hour very impatiently; at length he heard her, the sign was given, and she presently joined him. After the common salutations, and eager enquiries for the health of her lady, she proceeded thus:

“O, Mr. Philip, such doings, such a feasting and riding those two days past, one would think this *new Madame* never knew what good eating and riding in a

carriage were till now.—God help me, when I seed her get into my Lady's bed, and this morning into the chaise, I could have pulled her great goggling black eyes out with all my heart; but it don't signify me, for there is Madame Virgy, our housekeeper, does so "My Lady" her, and trots after her so civilly and respectful, ~~that~~ 'tis quite a shame to see it.

"But I have told my intention to go, and this morning Madam housekeeper said I might go the day after to-morrow, she had one ready for my place:—So, Mr. Philip, only say where I am to meet you?" Philip was disappointed in not hearing something more consequential, and was also displeased at the words "*new Madame*." "Pray," said he, "Janette don't say *new Madame*, there never was *any Madame* there till now." "Why then, to tell you the truth, Mr. Philip, John said last night that the Countess, who passed for a relation, had long been a mistress to the Marquis, and all her spite was because of his new fancy; and that

that—but, lord! you will be so mad to hear it”——

“Hear what?” cried Philip; “pray tell me.” “Why then he said, God forgive his wickedness! that our dear lady, the Marchioness, was no betterer than she here now, for that her husband was alive when she married the Marquis.”

“How! what?” exclaimed Philip, almost petrified. “Yes, indeed, he said so, but we none of us believed it; such a sweet, good-looking, beautiful lady, never could be so wicked.—Don’t say a word, Mr. Philip, I see you are angry again, but ’tis not my fault, you would know what John said; but indeed I don’t believe a word, so pray tell me where I am to meet you?”

Philip gave her a direction to the foot of the mountain, and they quickly parted; he, overcome with grief and astonishment—What! could it be possible? his master alive, and his mistress marry the Marquis! No wonder she grieved so much when the Marquis used her ill.—

But no, it was *impossible*; she looked so good, so innocent, she so loved his respectable master, and grieved so much when it was said he was dead: no, no, it could never be, that Monsieur Bruyere should be living.

He went on in deep thought: then her eager desire to visit Lisbon occurred; 'twas strange, he could not understand it; if his master were living, she could not have the courage to face him, if dead, why did she want to go there, among strangers, where even his grave must be unknown to her. The more he thought, the more he was lost in conjecture; that she hated the very name of the Marquis was certain, and yet but a few days before she refused to see *him*, lest it should be known, and displease the Marquis. 'Twas very odd, there was a mystery in her conduct he could not comprehend; yet neither could he believe she acted wrong, much less for a moment entertain an idea that his master was alive, though the bare mention of it had greatly disturbed him.

He

He returned to Madame Bruyere with a countenance so full of expression, an eye that seemed big with wonder, and so penetrating when he spoke to her, that she was in *her* turn alarmed; and after hearing the nothings that Janette had uttered---“And is *this* all, Philip,” said she; “have you concealed nothing from me? either I am a poor reader of the features and looks, or you have more interesting information to give me if you please.”

She saw his increased confusion and perplexity.---“My friend,” added she, in a tone of mild resignation, “fear not to communicate evil tidings, I can bear every thing short of my children’s being torn from me---have you heard that I have *that* evil to apprehend?”

“No, *indeed*, Madame,” he replied with earnestness. “Then, good Philip, tell me the cause of that perplexity that clouds your countenance; nothing that regards myself can now give me pain.---Speak, I conjure you; I am so prepared

by unequalled misery to suffer, that you have no cause to fear any ill effects from what you may have to communicate."

" 'Tis in vain," said Philip, "to attempt any disguise, your searching eye, Madame, reads one's heart; pardon me, therefore, for repeating the words of another, and for being disturbed by such an improbable story," He then related every word Janette had told him, and seeing her agitation, he again sued for pardon, and declared, he was shocked at repeating such a strange, improbable, and false report.

She was not for some minutes capable of answering him.—To have her character traduced, her name bandied about by licentious tongues, among footmen and chambermaids, the heralds of every scandalous tale; to have it supposed she had basely entered into an illegal marriage, whilst her husband was yet in existence; O, this was, indeed, an aggravation of cruelty and insult, that she never could have supposed the

the most diabolical of mankind would have been guilty of.

When a little recovered from the shock, tears in spite of her endeavours, streaming from her eyes; "My good Philip," said she, "the story you have heard, though improbable, is not impossible, nor yet in some parts untrue; you deserve my confidence, read that letter, the Countess's, and spare me the pain and shame of relating a horrid tale that almost deprives me of my reason to reflect on."

She rose, and retired to her children in the other apartment. It was yet early in the day, she took their hands, and to conceal her emotions, walked with them to the mount, and from thence came round to the side where the cavern was concealed; "Dear mamma," said Henry, "don't let us approach that place, I am sure, you have taught me not to entertain fear without danger appears, and I know there is no danger of supernatural beings, such as our Louison used to talk of; but
indeed

indeed both Henrietta and myself were frightened here yesterday."

"In what manner or by what means? my love," asked she. "Why, we had a mind to look down this cave, and Henrietta said she should like much to go a little way down; it was dark to be sure, but we would not go out of the light; we descended a few yards, and then stopt, not much inclined to go farther, but neither of us spoke, when suddenly a hollow murmuring, yet very distant, noise reached our ears, more like a deep groaning than any thing else; we both ran back, and blamed ourselves for going to any such places without our mamma or Philip."

"It was not quite right, my dear, certainly," said she, "but as to the noise, depend upon it, Henry, it could be nothing more than the wind whistling through the dreary cavern; which in such places frequently happens from chasms that let in a partial air."

"It

"It *might* be so," returned Henrietta, "but I am sure it appeared to me to be the groans of somebody in great pain." "Impossible, child," said Madame, "but let me warn you not to ramble about alone; since you are so weak as to be terrified with such common sounds." They were silent, ashamed to say more, for though not very ready to give up the impression that dwelt upon their minds, they paid too much respect to the judgment of their mamma to persist in their own opinions.

Returning from their walk, she found Philip sitting with his hands folded, and looking like the statue of despair, she had left the children in the other room going to amuse themselves in drawing flowers; he started up, and seeing she was alone, "O, my lady, my dear respectable lady! what a fate is yours, how dreadful that of——" he stopt, the big tear rolled down his cheeks.

"Now," said she, "you know the extent of my misery; what I can propose to myself in going to Lisbon I know not; but

but is there a place in the habitable globe, where I can hope to find friends, or one hour's relief from the overwhelming sorrow that has fixed its abode in my bosom? Too sure there is not; then let me end my days in that fatal spot that holds the dearest, most injured of men. Alive, or dead, I shall never see him more, but the same country, the same city shall contain our ashes, and *that*," said she, passionately, and raising her eyes to heaven: "*that*, is all I seek for!"

Philip muttered something, "children," only was articulate. "Aye, there Philip, there, I feel the mother and the coward, what is to become of them now, of an age when their minds expanding, demands every care and attention? Alas! I am now unfit to act the preceptress, my duty is neglected, and my head incapable of study: but in Lisbon I may find more tranquillity."

Philip shook his head, as if he doubted the possibility of that, and then asked if she had not some cause to apprehend the
servant,

servant, belonging to the Marquis, who was still there, might know her.

“ In so large a city, 'tis very unlikely we should meet, but supposing it should so happen, what have I to fear, neither he nor his master, have any power over me; and who will concern themselves about persons of such little consequence as we shall appear. But, perhaps, Philip, you dislike——.” “ O, Madame,” cried he, interrupting her, “ do not finish that sentence, wherever you go, I will go, nor ever quit you whilst I live.”

Affected by the earnestness of this faithful servant, she could not speak, but held out her hand to him, which he kissed respectfully, and turned away to conceal the tears that gushed from his eyes.

From that hour she found relief in talking over her misfortunes to him, for sorrow is plaintive, and to speak of our afflictions, of those we love and lament, affords consolation to a mind of sensibility, and often imperceptibly beguiles that grief, which would otherwise prey
like

like a vulture upon the heart—she struggled to live for her children; and they happy in the uncontrolled society of their beloved parent, which they had been so often deprived of in the castle, never once regretted their plain fare, or hard bed; but, rejoiced that they had escaped from confinement for life.

Thus the time past 'till Janette was added to their party, an additional satisfaction to all, yet they were somewhat inconvenienced in their lodging, for there being only two rooms, and in one of them a basin of water, though the fountain was stopped, it was a very cold place; but Philip was not disposed to be uneasy about trifles, he fortified the corner where he slept pretty well, and on the arrival of Janette, Henry shared it with him.

This grateful girl who looked on Philip as the preserver of her life, and adored her lady, felt extremely happy in being permitted to join them; she said, the evening before she left the house, John told them in the kitchen, that the Marquis and his

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new lady were going to Paris in a fortnight, and that Monsieur Corthouse was to act in their absence with uncontrolled power over every one: a piece of information, she added, that seemed very greatly to displease Madame Virgy who happened to be present.

Madame Bruyere was perfectly indifferent to the motions of the Marquis, his name made her shudder, and she was not anxious to hear any more of his affairs, convinced that she had nothing now to apprehend from him, she determined, if her strength would permit, to begin her journey in a very few days.

It was now one of those delightful evenings, when the moon was near its meridian, and its pale beauties shone forth with a more than ordinary lustre; not a breath of air was seen to agitate the trees: there was a solemn stillness pervaded round the mountain, which invited Madame Bruyere to leave the hermitage and walk in the quiet green path that led to it, and round it. Her children were gone to rest,

rest, Philip and Janette were gossiping together, and she wished to indulge contemplation.

Her reflections were of the most unpleasant kind, and so entirely occupied her thoughts, that she was scarcely sensible where she strolled to; she was some distance from the back of the hermitage, where the trees were thickest and defended the humble dwelling from the north east wind—when she was suddenly alarmed by something rustling among the trees, she started, but before she had time to consider on the cause, or turn back, an elderly man, almost bent double, came forth, a bundle of wood under his arm.

He drew back a step or two, as if surprised, but not equally so with Madame Bruyere, who gave a little shriek, yet had not the power to move.

Both stood without advancing, he spoke, “be not alarmed Madame, I am old and helpless, with as little power, as inclination to do you any harm.” “Who are you, from whence do you come?” asked she, in

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in a tremulous voice, though rather more assured. "Like you, Madame, I am an inhabitant of this mountain, years of sorrow *I* have passed here; I fear some misfortunes have driven you to the same spot; if so, pardon me, I wish not to alarm you, but *that hermitage* is not a safe asylum."

"You know me then, said she, extremely surprised, "and also my residence?" "No, Madame, I know you not, chance discovered to me your abode in the hermitage two days ago; I was walking at night, as is generally my custom, I observed through one of the apertures in the building a glimmering light. It was such an unusual hour for any one to be there, that curiosity got the better of prudence, and I softly crept near to it, and plainly heard two voices; one, by its softness I could distinguish to be a female's, and it seemed the voice of sorrow—had it been that of distress, my infirmities must have precluded me from giving assistance; but I clearly discerned it was a friendly conversation, and that
grief,

grief, not terror, hung on the accents of the female.

"I confess to you, that going every evening for fire wood, I did intend to have gone round the hermitage, for as I do not often walk by day, I knew not whether they were chance passengers who had rested there, though the supposition was very unlikely; or whether the place had been sought for as an asylum from misfortune. Thus, Madame, though rather startled at your sudden appearance before me, I was more prepared than you could be for seeing a stranger at this hour, and in this place."

The old gentleman's loquacity had given Madame Bruyère time to recover from her fright, but before she could speak to him Philip came up hastily; "Ah! how, what, who are you?" cried he, placing himself between Madame, and the old man who had laid down his bundle of sticks. "Fear nothing, Philip," said his lady, "we have got a neighbour, I believe, though very unexpectedly met with here."

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“ In truth, Madame,” returned he, “ though I know there has been occasionally company in the hermitage, you are the only woman I have spoken to for fifteen years; as I have carefully shunned mankind, not from fear, but from a habit of dislike to my own species, some of whom I have found base, treacherous, and deceitful.”

“ Good heaven !” exclaimed Madame, with a sigh, “ then I am not singularly wretched, not the only victim to perfidy !”

“ Alas ! no Madame,” returned he, “ such is the depravity of human nature, that falsehood exists in every clime, and many unsuspecting, and too credulous mortals, fall into the toils that are spread by artifice and deceit.”

“ Will you accompany me to the hermitage,” asked she, stimulated both by curiosity and the interest she felt for a man at his time of life, apparently oppressed by misery; “ if it is not too late for you to be out, I shall feel gratified by your conversation.” “ I thank you, Madame,

dame, for your confidence in a stranger; it is *now* too late, but if you purpose remaining in your solitary habitation another evening, I will certainly wait on you to-morrow."

"I shall then expect you, 'tis most probable I shall be here a few days longer;" she made no attempt to leave him, the man also stood a few minutes as if lost in thought; then taking up his wood—"Heaven bless you, Madame," said he, "let me advise you to hasten back." "Why that caution," returned she, "have I any cause for apprehension?" "Perhaps not," he replied, "but 'tis not a proper hour for you to be out exposed to the night air." He turned from her and went back among the trees, she also directed her steps to the hermitage.

"This is an extraordinary meeting," observed she to Philip, "I wonder who this man can be, and where he resides." "I don't half like him," returned Philip, "there is a look about his eyes which I took notice of, the moon shining full in
his

his face, that some how does not look like an honest countenance." "Ah!" said she, "decide not hastily on a man's character from any particular traits in his features; we have but too much cause to infer that our opinions may often prove erroneous, if we judge merely from appearances—who, my friend, has fairer claims to esteem and confidence, from an open, pleasing, intelligent countenance, than the master of that castle we have left?"

"If the human heart were always legible in the face, could I have read his black designs in that open front, that expressive eye, which seemed to court, rather than fear a scrutiny. Oh! had *his* face been the index to *his* mind, your beloved master, and his wretched wife, had been preserved from undescribable misery! That man, my good Philip, should teach us, never to judge rashly on an exterior, whether pleasing or otherwise, for hasty judgments are in general subject to error."

"Very true, Madame," returned Philip,

“ I may be wrong, but I hope what I said of that man who has left us, is no breach of charity: to be sure that wicked Marquis is enough to silence one’s opinion of any body; O, he is one of Lucifer’s angels, permitted to retain his deceitful form to ensnare the good and virtuous!” Madame Bruyere made no reply, she returned silently to the hermitage, and after devoutly imploring the protection of heaven, for her unhappy family, she shared the poor bed of her beloved Henrietta.

The following day Madame Bruyere busied herself in preparing for her journey; Philip regretted that those things they had been obliged to purchase for a few days convenience, would soon be useless; “ to be sure,” said he, “ I know a good soul to whom half of them would be a prize.” “ Do you,” replied Madame, “ then your good soul shall be remembered, Philip.” “ The poor cottager where I hid myself, Madame, when discharged from the castle; he is related to Janette, and has a wife and three children—I dare say all the wealth

of

of the Marquis would not have tempted him to betray me, or do a dishonest action: but for him, and his poor mule, I could not have managed so well as I have done." "We will endeavour to reward him," said she, "and convince him that a good action rarely misses of a recompence."

She began now impatiently to expect her promised visitor, the evening was closing in, the moon shed its mild lustre over the earth; Henry and his sister were with Janette in the inner room; Philip proposed keeping guard by walking round the hermitage, for though his reason was convinced, the little prejudice he had taken against the man's eyes, was not quite removed, and he resolved not to be far off, though respect for his lady would not permit him to be present.

At length the man appeared, and under all the disadvantages of age, seeming decrepitude, and very mean apparel, she discerned the look of a gentleman, the remains of more prosperous days. He

viewed *her* with surprise and concern; so young, (for Madame was not then seven and twenty,) so beautiful, and so depressed by sorrow, which seemed to have taken possession of every feature; it was impossible to behold her without feeling an interest in her afflictions.

“After customary civilities, she said, “I read in your looks, Sir, surprise and curiosity, I feel an equal portion of both, may I, without intruding too far, ask the cause of your long seclusion from mankind?” “I have no wish to conceal any thing from you, Madame, those that have nothing to lose, must cease to fear; ’tis long since that the power of man could deprive me of any thing but a life I am weary of, and ready to resign whenever the Divine Giver of it, shall remand it.”

“In my prosperous days, I was known in society by the title of Count de Vassy, (Madame Bruyere started, but endeavoured to suppress her emotion) my fortune was not inconsiderable, my family and connections respectable; I had lost my
father

father when only an infant, and was brought up by my maternal grandfather, who with my mother were my guardians. Pride, austerity, and implacability, were the principal traits in the character of the Marquis de Charoll; my mother, with all the family hauteur, and strong prejudices, had yet a tender and affectionate heart: I was her only child, and after the death of my father, the chief object of her regards.

“ My education was liberal, no pains were spared to make me accomplished, and an ornament to the family consequence. At eighteen I was sent to travel, accompanied by a gentleman as a preceptor, whose independence and merit placed him in a superior point of view to the situation he accepted. Monsieur Poissy was learned, upright in his words and actions; ingenuous, amiable, and indulgent without impropriety. With this worthy man I travelled through France, Spain, and Italy; and with such a companion, a man less rational and attentive than

than myself, must have gleaned some improvement; I loved him, and it was my study and delight to merit his approbation.

“ On our return to France, my grandfather was highly gratified, and more readily than I expected, acceded to my wishes for a tour to England; restricting my absence, however, to six or eight months.

“ We arrived in London, the capital of that kingdom, and most fortunately met with a friend and distant relation of my father's family, Monsieur Bruyere; equally rejoiced at a meeting so unexpected, we mutually agreed to reside in one house together. He had no preceptor with him, though little older than myself, but he had accompanied some English gentlemen well known to his friends, and from their recommendations was received into the most polished society; I profited by his reputation, and passed my time most agreeably in the first circles. It would be a needless prolixity, Madame, to entertain you with our juvenile amusements; with the different

ferent journies I made through the kingdom, and my remarks on men and manners; all those things, however, impressed on my memory by solitude and reflection, can afford no gratification to you: I shall therefore hasten to the event that decided the colour of my future destiny.

“ Bruyere and myself were one evening returning to town from a village five miles distant from London, where we had dined, when we observed a female in deep mourning walking slowly on the road before us; curiosity naturally impelled two young men to overtake her, we did so; but she had drawn a kind of hood, then worn, so entirely over her face, that we could only discern she was young, and appeared to be oppressed either with pain or sorrow; for she walked feebly, and had in her hand a small bundle in a white handkerchief.

“ Bruyere, who spoke English better than myself, indeed perfectly well, accosted her, and asked if she would accept of his arm, as she appeared fatigued; ‘ No, Sir, I thank you, I want not any

assistance,' those were her words, but had you heard the tone of voice, (imprinted on my memory) with which she spoke, affection and compassion would have irresistably engaged your attention. Such were its effects upon me, that I eagerly said, 'at any rate, young lady, permit me to assist you by taking the charge of your parcel, which must incommode you.'

"Whether it were the earnestness of my manner, or my foreign accent that attracted her attention I know not, but she turned her head gently towards me; 'You are very obliging Sir, gentlemen I thank you both, but,' added she, 'if you will proceed on *your* walk, and permit *me* to pass quietly on, I shall be still more obliged to you.'

'You shall be obeyed,' cried Bruyere, and taking my arm, 'come, Count, leave the young lady to her own wishes.' In vain he would have drawn me on, most unaccountably I lingered, and died with curiosity to see her face, and to be her companion. This sudden attraction could
only

only be attributed to compassion; her form was delicate, her steps weak, and her voice so musically plaintive, that for the soul of me, I could not be persuaded to lose sight of her, though Bruyere grew impatient and railled me on my reluctance to leave this solitary pedestrian.

“ Whilst we were stalking on, three men passed us, one of them very much inebriated, the others of the lowest class; I was talking to my friend of the strange propensity which the common people in England appeared to have for liquor, when suddenly I heard a shriek, and, looking back, saw the drunken man was pulling the poor girl by the arm, swearing he would have a kiss, and the others laughing at his rudeness.

“ I darted back in a moment, and drawing my sword, wretches, I exclaimed, fly this moment, or take the consequence! the sword glittering in their eyes, or the vehemence of my voice, quickly had its effects, the sober ones drew off their companion, and hastened out of sight.

“ The poor young creature had got up against the hedge, and when I approached her, was incapable for a moment of speaking. ‘ I hope,’ said I, ‘ that brute has not much terrified you ; you must see now the inconvenience of walking alone at this hour ; pray permit us to protect you ’till you are safe in town.’ ‘ Oh ! Sir,’ said she, in a tremulous voice, ‘ you have indeed saved me from insult, but I shall be such a tax on your good-nature, for you see I cannot walk but very slowly.’

“ This objection I soon removed, but all my entreaties and my friend’s were fruitless to make her accept an arm from either—‘ No,’ said she, ‘ you are not accustomed to a companion of my appearance, with a bundle ; I thank you for your solicitude, but I will not disgrace my protectors.’ It was in vain to contend, she was decisive, her language and manners proved she had been educated above the vulgar, though she spoke very little, and I could hear many half sighs she seemed willing to suppress.

“ Thus

“ Thus we went on till we came through the last village adjoining to the town: ‘ Now, gentlemen, I believe I am perfectly secure from insult, accept my best thanks, and pardon me, if I wish you to leave me.’ ‘ You will not then permit me to ask your name, or residence ?’ said I. ‘ Neither is deserving your notice,’ answered she, ‘ nor can ever be of consequence to be known to any one :—Gentlemen, once more accept my grateful acknowledgments—good night.’

“ She turned short round the corner of a street, and walked with increased speed.

‘ By heaven !’ cried I, ‘ I must, and will follow her.’ ‘ Ridiculous,’ said Bruyere, ‘ I own there is something very interesting about her, but don’t play the fool, Count ; I believe the girl is honest, and why should we intrude upon her.’ Oh ! had I then taken his advice, what years of misery had been spared to the dear unhappy Clara and myself ; but, for the first time in my life, I was obstinate, I drew my arm from him, and turned slowly up

the street after her, just able to distinguish her form, as it was now quite dusk. Bruyere would not leave me, though he affected to be displeased, and walked on the opposite side of the street.

“ The encreasing darkness made me step quicker after her, at length I saw her stop at a door, and she was presently let in. I now advanced and observed the house, which had but a poor appearance, and was between two shops, one of them belonging to a glover and hosier; I walked into this, and Bruyere joined me; having made a few purchases, I asked who lived at the next house. The master of the shop looked at me, and repeating my words, replied tartly, ‘ Really, Sir, we do not concern ourselves about our neighbours.’

“ Naturally frank and unreserved, and stimulated by an irresistible impulse, without the least hesitation, I repeated the circumstance of our meeting the young woman I had followed: ‘ You can suspect me of no ill design in my enquiries,’ added I, ‘ for I protest to you we know not
4 whether

whether she is handsome or ugly ; compassion is my only motive ; she is either ill, or oppressed by sorrow ; from the look of her habitation, I rather fear her circumstances are indigent ; I wish to serve her, though I have never seen her face, and care very little whether she has any attractions or not.'

'Your frankness, Sir,' said he, 'makes me believe that humanity is indeed your only motive for this enquiry, and though not very common in a young gentleman, Heaven may have inspired you to assist those worthy unfortunate people. Know then, the door which you saw her stop at, belongs to this house, 'tis a private door for lodgers, as I have made two small tenements into one ; this young lady, for she has a right to be called such, lives here with her mother, who is the widow of a dignified clergyman, and they once lived very highly, and kept the best company—too much, I believe, for on the gentleman's death they were deprived of all his income, and found they could not discharge the

the debts owing without giving up every thing of value.

‘ Mrs. Beaufort could not bear that her husband’s name should be spoken of with disrespect, she sold all her plate, jewels, and furniture, paid every sixpence, and had remaining about seventy pounds. Miss Clara was then about fifteen, and Mrs. Beaufort proposed, as she had been well educated, to retire into some small town and open a school.

‘ Poor lady, she never murmured or complained; an aunt of mine had been her own woman when there were six or seven servants, and she resolved not to leave her mistress. Miss Clara behaved like an angel, she comforted her mother, and promised herself the pleasure of instructing others, and procuring a genteel living with independence. All their great friends forsook them when the Dean died, and no more entertainments could be had; and Mrs. Beaufort had too much proper pride to apply to a few distant relations, who
knowing

knowing her circumstances ought to have flown to their relief.

‘ Well, Sir, they opened their little school in a town sixty miles from London, and for about a year did tolerably well, just got enough to support them ; when unhappily a putrid fever broke out in the school, of which three boarders out of seven died ; Mrs. Beaufort herself recovered with great difficulty, and has never been well since ; the other scholars were all taken away, expences fell heavy upon the poor lady, she was ill many weeks, and in that time a fine flaunting madam went down and opened a school to the entire ruin of Mrs. Beaufort, who after vainly struggling to regain her pupils, found herself involved for rent and medical attendance.

‘ To clear herself, she was obliged to sell her furniture, and after paying every demand, she had but twenty-nine pounds in the world.

‘ All they could now do, was to take in needle-work ; my aunt persuaded them to come and take an apartment with us ;
they

they did so, our hearts bled to see such ladies so much reduced, we endeavoured to make their little apartment comfortable, and my aunt, at their earnest request, accepted of a situation with Lady Greenway.

Here, Sir, the ladies have lived going on two years, and subsist solely by their needles; God knows, they hardly eat enough to keep them alive, and lately poor Mrs. Beaufort has been in a sad declining way, and all rests upon Miss Clara, who never goes out but to fetch and carry work, and then is so wrapt up, no one can know her. I know she works for a lady at Hammer-smith, and I suppose was coming from thence now: poor soul! no wonder she is feeble, for with working night and day, attending her good mother, and the affliction she is in for *her*, 'tis enough to destroy her health. We are but young beginners, and have three small children, so that we cannot help them; indeed, I believe they would die sooner than accept it.

“ Such

“ Such was the little affecting narrative the man related. You will wonder, Madame, that at this distant period I should remember every word ; alas ! ’tis the sole pleasure of my life to retrace each circumstance relative to my Clara, and the man’s story sunk into my heart, and remained for ever impressed on it.

“ Bruyere was to appearance equally affected with myself ; he had pulled out his purse, and giving the man ten pieces of gold, ‘ My good friend,’ said he, ‘ find some method of conveying this to the ladies, so as not to offend them.’ ‘ I know not how it can be done,’ answered he, ‘ but I will try, and if you please to call again in a day or two, I will either return the money, or let you know how it has been disposed of.’ ‘ Very well,’ returned Bruyere :’ I saw he looked at me with surprise ; I offered no money : ‘ What, Count,’ said he, ‘ are you pennyless ?’

‘ No,’ I replied, ‘ but we will wait the event of *your* offering ; too large a sum at once would most probably be rejected.’

I looked

I looked at the man expressively, he seemed to understand me, and as I followed Bruyere, I whispered, 'You will *certainly* see me again.'

"My friend made many humane observations on the story we had heard, and rejoiced that my curiosity had been productive of such a desirable relief to the worthy ladies, 'Who, I hope,' added he, 'will accept of our joint services to replace them once more in a school.' Though this generosity was truly laudable in him, I felt myself hurt by the idea of such persons being compelled to labour for their support, and this 'Angel Clara,' as the man called her, was in my eyes the most dignified object I had ever known.

"On our return, we repeated our adventure to Monsieur Poissy, he appeared little less interested than ourselves, and was very particular in his enquiries: Bruyere was the narrator, I spoke but little, though in general by far the most loquacious of the two; he observed the unusual silence, 'My dear Count, are you not well?'

Roused

Roused by the question, I endeavoured to recover my spirits, but in vain, this Clara hung about my heart, and most unaccountably I conceived a violent passion for a person to whose face I was a stranger.

“ The following day we had intended going to Greenwich, one of the palaces a few miles from town, but I determined on a different visit, taking care not to say a word till the party arrived whom we were to accompany ; I then complained of an indisposition, and desired to be excused, as I had letters to write, and would avail myself of that opportunity. Monsieur Poissy was alarmed, and desired to stay with me; with extreme persuasion I over-ruled his inclination, and insisted on his leaving me. Bruyere looked at me with a penetrating eye—‘ I doubt not your honour, my dear Count, but dangerous situations are more easily avoided than combated with, when we throw ourselves into them.’ This was said in a half whisper, I smiled a reply, and

and saw them take leave with much pleasure.

“ Monsieur Poiffy had insisted upon leaving a servant behind, who had attended us through all our travels ; I chose therefore to keep my word, and sat down to write two letters ; one to my grandfather, another to Mrs. Beaufort ; those being finished, I put the latter in my pocket, and telling the servant I was going out for a walk, bid him take the other letter to the post-house.

“ The moment I was disengaged, I flew to the good hosier's ; ‘ Mr. Clement,’ said I, ‘ I am a man of my word, you know not how much I feel interested for those unfortunate ladies ; have you succeeded to our wishes ?’

‘ Yes, Sir, by a stratagem of my wife's ; O, let the women alone for contrivance ; the moment you left us, said she, ‘ Give me the money ;’ she folded and sealed it in a piece of paper in a minute, and running up stairs, knocked at Mrs. Beaufort's door ; Miss Clara opened it—‘ O, dear Miss,

Miss, cried Mrs. Clement, I didn't know you was returned, but I have been so busy for some time that I could not leave the shop, my husband being out : here, madam, added she, giving the paper to Mrs. Beaufort, an elderly gentleman came this evening, ' So, said he, does not one Mrs. Beaufort live here ?' I thought he might come from some lady you knew, so I answered, yes : ' Well, said he, give her this small parcel, it comes from a relation tell her, who wishes her well, and may hereafter be a friend.' So, madam, he went away, and three or four people coming in, I hadn't time to bring it before, though 'tis better than an hour since he left it.'

Whilst she kept prating, Mrs. Beaufort opened the parcel and saw the money, ' This is surprising, said she, who could possibly send this money ; pray did he leave no name ?' ' No, madam, he put down the parcel and walked off ; I think he had much the look of a gentleman's steward.'

" Tears dropped from the eyes of Mrs. Beaufort

Beaufort as she looked on the money—
' Clara, my love, said she, what are we, to do ; we know not the donor, we cannot return it, yet my soul revolts against accepting this money, even should it come from a relation.'

' I am sure, returned my wife, I should not know the old gentleman's face again, and I dare say the marble heart of some of your rich relations begins to melt—but I must go and shut up shop.' Thus saying she left them.—There's a hand for you, Sir ; if I didn't know my wife to be a good woman, I should fear for my head, she has such a quick thought and tongue of her own. However, thank God, part of the money has been laid out this morning by Miss to procure her poor mother many things the dear lady wanted.'

" This account delivered by Mr. Clement gave me great pleasure, and I desired his notable wife to take up my letter, while I waited in no small agitation below. It was some time before she returned—said she, ' there has been a debate
between

between the ladies whether you shall be admitted; Miss was against it, her mother seemed rather desirous of seeing you; both asked if the parcel came from you, which I stoutly denied: God forgive me, I declared I had never seen you before, and the other was an elderly man. Miss Clara, however, desired not to be present, and so now, Sir, I'll show you the way.'

"My heart fluttered as I mounted the stairs, but when I entered the room and saw a pale emaciated form, the respectable ruins of a very handsome woman, I found it difficult to stammer out an apology for my intrusion; she feebly rose to return my salute; surprise was legible in *her* countenance, in mine, I believe, respect and compassion.

'You say, Sir,' said she, 'that you have particular business with me; I know no man on earth with whom I have any business to transact, be so good then to let me know the nature of yours.' 'Permit me, Madam, first to speak of myself, that you may know the man that presumes to address

'dress you.' I briefly told her my name, family, and situation in England; I then entered upon the accidental rencounter with her daughter the preceding evening.

'I know it all, Sir,' said she, assuming an air of dignified composure, 'but why should such a casual meeting procure me the honour of seeing you here? It is not common in England to seek or form acquaintance with chance passengers we meet in a walk.' I expected the observation, and having prepared my answer, I told her that I had felt myself so much interested for the young lady, who appeared weak and fatigued, that I found it impossible to rest without soliciting the honour of being told by her mother, if friendship or interest could in the least be serviceable to her.

'I must appear romantic to you, Madam, when I declare that I never saw her face, or heard her speak twenty words, yet I feel as much concern for her health, as much interested for her happiness, as if I
had

had known her for years, or as if I were her brother.'

'If not romantic,' answered she, 'you must allow, Sir, that your conduct is very eccentric and extraordinary: but pray how did you learn our names?' 'From the master of the house, Madam; I seek not to deceive you, I repeated to him briefly what I have said to you; though a stranger and a foreigner, I am not unknown in London, and if you will permit me to be serviceable to you in any shape you may command, you will do me an inexpressible pleasure.'

"Tears gushed from her eyes—'Yours,' said she, 'seems to be the language of truth, confirmed by the energy in your countenance; yet that *you*, a person entirely unknown, should thus interest yourself for persons equally strangers to you, appears wholly unaccountable; permit me, however, to say, and be not offended, that if the slight view you have had of my daughter, should have inspired you with a wish to know *her* better, and any pre-

VOL. II. 1 sumptuous

sumptuous affrontive views are lodged in your bosom inimical to her peace and honour——'

'Stop, Madam,' I cried, 'finish not the sentence, I would not be the villain you suppose, for a thousand worlds—I would preserve the peace and honour of your daughter at the hazard of my life; but may Heaven crush me to atoms, if one thought injurious to her purity, your peace, or my own honour, ever had a place in my bosom.' 'I *must* believe you, Sir, for I would not suppose human nature so depraved, as that a being could be found base enough to add fresh wounds to a bleeding heart, or to mask duplicity and vice under the semblance of generosity and compassion—but, giving you credit for the sentiments you profess, tell me, Sir, what are your motives, what your designs, in thus seeking out two unfortunate women forsaken by the world?'

"I scarce knew what to answer, for I had followed the impulse of my heart, without any decided plan; I wished to

procure

procure for them ease and comfort, but knew not what to propose or in what manner to settle it, that might answer my wishes, and not offend their delicacy. She saw my hesitation, and I thought looked displeased—I hastened to speak.

‘It would be easy for me, Madam, to mention my designs, did not respect and delicacy make me diffident—at present, I will only entreat you to allow me the extreme happiness of being considered as a friend; a man whose heart will be warmly gratified, if you will honour him with your confidence, and permit his interest and fortune to be exerted in preserving you and your amiable daughter from future disquietudes. That you may judge favourably of my principles, I request your permission to bring my preceptor and friend, Monsieur Poissy, to wait on you—his age and character will I trust induce you to discard that natural doubt of my integrity which generally fastens on the mind, when a stranger is too forward in his professions of friendship.’

“ She seemed hesitating, I went on—
‘ Allow me, Madam, to introduce my friend, it will be at your own option, to accept of or discourage a second visit; and earnest as I am in my wishes to cultivate your acquaintance, if that wish militates against your inclinations, after this second visit, I pledge my honour to give up the attempt (though I may regret my disappointment) of any further intrusion on you.’

“ I spoke with an earnestness that denoted the sincerity of my words. ‘ Sir,’ said she, ‘ the more I hear, the more I am astonished at your sentiments, and the purport of this visit; ’tis so unlike the language and manners of the world, and the whole affair so accidental, your curiosity and concern for people whose *persons even*, you were unacquainted with, that I am inclined to think it was the interposition of Providence, and to counteract it would be to slight the bounty of Heaven.’

“ She paused a moment, then added,
‘ Take

‘Take care, Sir, that you do not make me impiously presumptuous, or for the short time I have to live, embitter my last hours with sorrow for my credulity.’ Those last words were spoken in such a solemn, yet tremulous voice, that I could with difficulty repress my emotion; I took her hand and respectfully kissed it—‘May Heaven be good to me, as I will deserve your confidence and esteem.’

‘Enough, Sir,’ said she, ‘I doubt no longer.’ “She rose, and with feeble steps opened an adjoining room—‘Clara, my love, you have heard, I wish you also to approve, this worthy and eccentric young man, whom I feel inclined to receive as a friend.’ “She then led in the blushing beautiful Clara, for never had I, never have I, seen a countenance so truly lovely and interesting—Oh! it is imprinted on my heart, every feature engraven there, with the remembrance of her thousand virtues, her angelic mind, and her cruel sufferings!”

The old man made a pause in his story to struggle against the feelings that at their

recollection overpowered him—"Excuse me, Madame," said he, "I am tedious and prolix; alas! I love to dwell on every particular relative to my lost angel; I forget you are not equally interested, and will endeavour to abridge my story.

"Whatever charms my imagination had formed as adorning this young woman were so infinitely surpassed by her appearance, that I was incapable, in the confusion of the moment, of attending to, or returning the little compliment she made me for the service I had rendered her the preceding evening; I thought too, there was a mixture of surprise and complacency in her looks.

"What reply I made I know not, for my senses were intoxicated, nor did I presently recover, so as to join rationally in conversation. At length I recollected the time I had intruded on them, and having received permission to introduce my friend, I rose very reluctantly to take leave. '*Remember, Sir,*' said Mrs. Beaufort, impressively, 'that I believe you to be a man of honour,

honour, respect the widow and orphan, they have sacred claims that ought never to be violated.' 'As such,' I replied, 'they are imprinted on *my heart*.'

I "I left the house and returned to our lodgings, no longer the gay, cheerful fellow whose spirits were said to animate all parties; Clara, the lovely Clara, absorbed every idea of my soul, and I passed the remainder of the day restless and uneasy, at the tedious hours which must intervene before I could see her again.

"My friends returned, and finding me at home and alone, gave me credit for the indisposition I had complained of, and which was more in my heart than in my head; they dwelt on the pleasurable excursion they had made, only regretted my absence from the party. Bruyere took an opportunity to ask me archly, 'If I had called at my hosier's to-day?' I replied, 'that I had, and he had observed our directions very well.' He smiled, and dropt the subject. Our friends took leave; Bru-

were fatigued, wished us a good night, and I was left alone with Monsieur Poissy.

"Accustomed ever to the most unre-served confidence in this worthy man, I very frankly communicated to him, all I have repeated to you; he heard me with attention, and I observed a pensive seriousness steal over his features as I proceeded. When I had finished my tale, he thus addressed me:

'My dear Count I honour your susceptibility and humanity; the more so, as there is little doubt but those unfortunate ladies have every claim to respect and esteem. But tell me, what is it you propose doing to serve them? As women, interest can be of little use, they can have neither places nor pensions. In what rank of life is it you wish, or have the power of placing them? The mother, you think, cannot live many weeks; 'tis easy and laudable to render the close of her life happy. But the daughter, this lovely young woman, what is to be done for her?'

'Ah,'

‘Ah !,’ answered I, in the thoughtless eagerness of youth, ‘I will surely protect *her* from every calamity that must befall an orphan.’

“He shook his head, ‘My young friend, do you consider what you say? Hitherto those respectable women, though overwhelmed with calamities, have risen superior to misfortunes by their integrity and virtuous conduct; would you deprive them of their sole consolation? Will not the visits of a young man like you tend to throw a shade of suspicion over them, injurious to their reputation? Would *you* wound the un sullied purity of that young woman, by giving the breath of scandal a pretence to doubt her honour, and tarnish her fair fame beyond all reparation? I see the horror of your countenance; it tells me how greatly your heart revolts at the idea—cherish the impression, and—visit them no more!’

‘How,’ I cried, agonized by the picture he had held to my view—‘Not visit them! impossible; have I not engaged to

go and present you?" "Permit me," said he, "to be your representative: I will frankly tell them my motives for requesting the discontinuance of your visits; if they are such as you represent them, they will applaud the step my duty imposes on me; and, I thank heaven, I can add to your benevolent designs; we will purchase an annuity for them, that shall always preserve them in comfort and respectability."

"I made no reply; he saw the anguish of my mind, and read my sentiments more clearly than I knew them myself at that moment. He rose, 'Good night, my amiable young friend, I adore your humanity, and am proud of my pupil. Reflect with deliberation, and in the morning give me your directions.'

"He left me, and I retired, but not to rest, the distraction of my mind precluded sleep; I felt the full force of every word Poissy had uttered; and from the terror which trembled at my heart, when I thought of seeing Clara no more; the secret
and

and violent passion I had so suddenly conceived burst upon me in full conviction. What then must be the consequence to encrease that admiration by frequent interviews, to entangle her in a dangerous delusion impossible to be realized from the pride and ambition of my family? To add fresh aggravations to their sorrows, either by inspiring her with a hopeless passion, or wounding her reputation by my fruitless visits? Could I, who would die to serve that lovely maid, could I be the cause of additional misery to her? Perish the thought!

“Yet how gladly would I sacrifice all ambitious views, how happy would a small competency make me with such a companion as Clara!

“I met my friends in the morning with looks that denoted the inquietude of my mind; I told Bruyere, Poissy and I had an engagement, and as we lived in perfect freedom, he made no enquiries, but soon left us. I then requested my friend to permit me to introduce him; and

that when he had seen them, if he thought there was danger, or impropriety in my visits, I would repeat them no more, but give to his management the mode of making some provision for them. He embraced me, applauded my generosity, and assured me he now esteemed me more than ever.

"I was impatient for our visit, nor did he feel less desire for the interview.—We came to the house, were announced, and admitted. Mrs. Beaufort had been very ill, we heard, with spasms in her stomach, though now, Mrs. Clement said, she was something better. When we entered the room, Mrs. Beaufort was supported by pillows in an arm chair, her face so pale, her looks so languid, that it was impossible to view her without respect and compassion. Her too lovely daughter sat by her at work, extremely plain in her dress, which was deep mourning, and a close cap, without any ornament.

"She rose on our entrance, a deep blush suffusing her delicate cheeks; I saw that

Poissy

Poissy was much affected; he approached them with the greatest respect, entreated pardon for the intrusion of a stranger at the request of his young friend, who had been most fortunate in being permitted the honour of an acquaintance with ladies so truly respectable. He entreated Mrs. Beaufort to have proper medical advice, and if a change of air could be of service to her, he would with pleasure procure her every accommodation.

‘ I am advanced in life, Madam, and have seen many of its vicissitudes ; I know that noble minds acquire a laudable pride from adversity, but even our very virtues may be carried to a blameable excess. That mind which is too fastidious to afford transport to another, from the idea of an obligation being fastened on itself, I must pronounce incapable of feeling true generosity, or of knowing how much a laudable exertion of it overpays itself.’

“ The tears flowed down Clara’s cheeks, she rose, and walked to the window to conceal them ; Mrs. Beaufort sighed deeply,
and

and holding out her emaciated hand to Poissy — ‘I comprehend every word of your generous preface ; I will prove to you that my confidence in mankind is not quite locked up, nor that a too proud spirit rejects the offers of friendship. Sir, your countenance, your words affect me more than I can express ; I consider you no longer as a stranger.’ It was with difficulty she spoke from the oppression on her breast. ‘My child,’ added she, ‘my only support and comfort—(Clara hastily left the room) ah ! Sir, you know not, cannot conceive, the exertions, the struggles of that good young creature to preserve the feeble lamp of life, how I am convinced drawing to a period—’tis for her I want a friend.’

‘I will be that friend, Madam,’ he replied ; ‘a true, disinterested friend.—My pupil, the Count de Vassy, will enable me to perform every engagement I enter into. His youth and situation precludes him from being the ostensible person ; respect for you, and your daughter induces him

him to delegate every power to me; I even think, under your very delicate circumstances, he ought not to visit here, though I know it will be doing violence to his generous heart.'

"I had walked to the window, in my turn, to hide my emotions: 'Now,' said Mrs. Beaufort, 'I feel you are indeed a friend; I had absolutely determined this day to prohibit the visits of that too amiable young man; you enter into my sentiments, a heavy weight is taken from my bosom.'

'Pardon me,' I cried involuntarily, 'I will not engage to refrain my visits entirely. Why am I to be deprived of participating in so much felicity? But I will thus far concede to your wishes and to propriety; I will not presume to wait on you, Madam, unaccompanied by Monsieur Poissy.'

'Well, my dear Count,' said he, 'I know that I can rely on your word, and I am sure you feel too much sacred respect for this lady to cause her one moment's
in-

inquietude. Shall I, as a proof of your complaisance, ask you to leave me, and I will meet you an hour hence at our lodgings? "I hesitated, but Clara had left the room, possibly not to return whilst we remained. I therefore took my hat, and requesting my respects to her, quitted the house in such a confused state of mind, that I hardly knew whether to be angry or pleased with Monsieur Poiffy, and almost wished I had never taken him to the house.

"In a disturbed, I may say distracted way, I walked the room till his return, which was full two hours after me, and in my calculation an age. I flew to him, 'Dear Poiffy, what have you done for them, are they not amiable creatures?' Without noticing my impatience, he quietly seated himself——'To say truth, my dear Count, I have never been more affected in my life than by this morning's visit. Mrs. Beaufort, after you left us, entered into a detail of her misfortunes. Much indeed has she suffered; for know
those

those ladies had for more than a week, till last night, taken no other sustenance than bread and milk, which with want of rest and anxiety for her mother, rendered Miss Clara so weak when you overtook her on the road.

She had walked to Hammer-smith with work she had sat up all night to finish, in the hope of procuring a trifle of money, to get something comfortable for her mother; weakness had obliged her to rest very often in going, and on her arrival she found the lady was gone into the country, there were no directions left to pay her; and with a heavy, disappointed heart, and without having tasted any thing, but a cup of milk in the morning, she was obliged to return, with all the horrors upon her mind of her poor mother's necessities, her own encreasing weakness, and her inability to procure even milk another day, without application to the people below.

In this frame of mind you overtook that good and respectable young woman;
judge

judge of the nobleness of her sentiments when in that distress she avoided your civilities, and evaded your curiosity. Let it afford you inexpressible delight, my *young pupil*, to reflect that you have been an instrument under heaven, to preserve two valuable women from despair and certain misery; nor must Bruyere go without his share of praise, his beneficent mind shall rejoice in the fortunate exertion of his humanity to persons so deserving.

‘Tell me,’ said I, eagerly, ‘what you think of Clara?’ ‘I have already made her eulogium,’ answered he, coldly.

‘I esteem and revere her; if you mean her *person*, I think her very lovely; but the virtues of her heart make her more interesting than beautiful. To speak at once my sentiments, know, that at our first entrance into the apartment, my judgment decided in her favour.

‘After your visit the preceding evening, hundreds of young women would have dressed themselves to the best advantage to receive you again. This young

lady

lady saw and felt the delicacy of her situation; the plain modesty of her attire, the very air of her cap, evinced the purity and dignity of her mind, and my heart did homage to the propriety of her conduct.

‘My dear Count,’ said he, looking expressively at me, ‘they have virtues that dignify adversity, and I trust, through your beneficence, and my exertions, we shall procure to them that moderate independence which will gratify every wish; and if we cannot prolong Mrs. Beaufort’s life, at least we can smooth the rugged road before her to a better world, in a certainty that her virtuous and deserving daughter will be secured from indigence, and the contempt of the undiscerning multitude.’

“My feelings were undescrivable; I again asked what he had done. ‘Procured a physician,’ he replied, ‘taken care that Mrs. Beaufort has a proper nurse, and every thing *her* situation requires, and that can relieve Miss Clara from trouble and anxiety. She mentioned

tioned the money, and believed it proceeded from you. I would not impose upon her, or rob Bruyere of the merit due to his generosity; she looked humbled, I thought, but I explained the humanity of his intention in such a manner, that she consented to retain the money, when she understood that he had no intention of being known to her. You must now, Count, give me your word that you will not go to Mrs. Beaufort's for one week at least; when I have settled them comfortably, through your assistance, I will accompany you on a visit with pleasure.'

'A week!' I cried, 'and why must I wait so long?' 'The delicacy of your own feelings, I should suppose,' said he, 'would dictate to you, that while I am employed in conferring obligations on them in your name, and while their sensibility is tremblingly alive to gratitude, and their minds naturally oppressed with a sense of favours, that must in some degree wound their self-consequence, they cannot behold you without such emotions

as must pain a truly generous heart, and be equally unpleasant to both parties.'

"My judgment submitted, though my heart revolted, against this proper advice; yet I endeavoured to conceal my impatience from him, and that reserve, for the first time, taught me to know the true nature of my sentiments, that I doated on the lovely Clara, and could figure to myself no possible happiness without her.

"Bruyere, who happened at that time to have a little amour that engaged his heart, and much of his time, heard the story of Mrs. Beaufort with no other sentiments than compassion and a generous desire of contributing any sum towards their relief—he expressed no curiosity to see Clara, and finding I did not visit there, but that Monsieur Poissy undertook every thing, he concluded me as disinterested as himself. Neither my pride nor love however would permit any contributions from him, and I made a point with Poissy to refuse them as unnecessary; Bruyere made no remarks, only replied, 'Well, as you please ;

please; but remember I am always ready to concur in a laudable action, whenever you will oblige me by calling on me, freely.'

"A week passed most heavily with me, and exactly at its termination, I asked Monsieur Poissy, if I might yet visit Mrs. Beaufort? (he had every day given me a slight account, that she continued much the same, and that he was engaged in finding out some eligible mode of securing an income to them by purchase.) In answer to my question, he turned his eyes full upon me, 'I know not; she was ill, and her spirits extremely low yesterday; I am going there by and by, and if she can admit you, we will go in the afternoon; mean time I want your presence to settle the affair of the income; it can be concluded this morning.'

"I accompanied him with alacrity, and by proper deeds secured to Mrs. and Miss Beaufort, for their joint lives, a hundred pounds a year, English money, and payable quarterly at a house of great respectability.

tability. I thought this too little—'Tis as much as I can prevail on Mrs. Beaufort to accept; I honour the justness of her sentiments; 'tis enough to procure every comfort,' said she; '*more than what is necessary* would make me despicable to accept, and humble me too much.' Those were her words; had she thought otherwise, I should not have felt that high respect for her character that I now do.—Those that deserve much are generally contented with a little, while the proud and presumptuous never think they have enough.' I coincided with his sentiments, secretly determined to find ways of adding to their income.

"He left me to take the deed to them, but returned not to dinner; I was almost mad with impatience; in my petulance I cursed his ill-nature, and regretted that I had ever introduced him to Mrs. Beaufort; my honour was pledged that I would not go without him; and I accused him of playing the tutor, and treating me like a boy when I was near two and twenty.—

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I recollected that to them and to myself he had lately affected to call me *his pupil*; and though certainly placed in his care some years back, and still feeling myself obliged to his experience and knowledge, yet I conceived I had a right, if I chose it, to emancipate myself from his government, since he presumed so much on his situation.

“Whilst I was indulging sentiments so unjust to the upright heart of Monsieur Poissy, I received a note from him, saying, that he had reason to fear Mrs. Beaufort had a very ^{few} hours to live, and requested I would follow the bearer, if I wished to see her once more.

“I flew rather than walked to the house, and at the door met Mr. Clement. —‘Ah! Sir,’ said he, ‘’tis almost over with the poor lady, I fear.’—I knocked at the door of the apartment, it was opened by my friend, the room was empty.

‘Dear Count,’ he cried, ‘I am sorry to tax your sensibility by this scene, but I knew you would never forgive me had I

not

not sent, and indeed the dying lady wished to see you once more; call up your fortitude, and do not add to the distress of her deeply afflicted daughter.'

"I followed him to the next room, unable to speak; he announced my name, and I drew near the bed; Mrs. Beaufort supported on one side by Mrs. Clement, on the other by her daughter, on whose bosom she rested her head. Clara was the image of despair, her pale cheeks, her eyes sunk, and her trembling frame bespoke the anguish of her heart; but not a tear fell from her eyes, they were fixed on her mother's face; she just raised them at my approach, but they dropt immediately on the dear object she supported.

"Mrs. Beaufort hearing my name, turned her head gently towards me, and extended her hand. 'Heaven bless you!' said she, with much difficulty, '*you* have made my passage easy to that place of rest now before me—May God reward you—I wished to thank you with my last breath—and, oh! I charge you, in this

awful hour, when the eye of God is upon us—I charge you to reverence—to respect *my child, the orphan before you*, as you would do *a sister*—so may God bless you in *your last hour*.’

“Inexpressibly shocked by the scene before me, the agitation and extreme difficulty with which she addressed me, and the sight of the suffering angel that supported her; my passions, my feelings, were roused to a degree of wildness that I could not suppress; and before she had well finished her last words, I exclaimed with energy, ‘Yes, here, in your presence, in the sight of God, I pledge myself to be her friend, protector, and husband!’

“Poissy cried out—‘Count! recover yourself, what have you said!’ The young lady uttered a faint groan, and sunk senseless on her mother’s pillow; she attempted to speak, the groan of her daughter pierced her ear, she dropt her head on her inanimate child, and expired without

without a sigh; her respiration stopped by her sudden emotion.

“ I was like a statue; the women were endeavouring to draw the poor Clara from her mother; Poissy came and took my arm, he was excessively agitated, he drew me into the next room—‘ O,’ said he, ‘ did I ever believe you would have given me cause to curse the hour, when I consented to oblige and follow your wishes; that you would destroy my happiness, ruin my reputation, and, alas! what is of far more consequence, make me an instrument to blast all *your* prospects of felicity in life.—O, Count, what have you sworn!’

‘ What I resolutely intend to perform,’ I replied: ‘ but this is not a time for altercation; return and see if the dear unhappy girl is recovered.’

“ He left me, and then the tumults of my passion a little subsided; I reflected on what had passed, not with regret, for the world was nothing to me without Clara; but I knew the almost insurmountable obstacles I had to encounter with my family,

and the prejudices of the great; and at the same time was ignorant if the object of my attachment had viewed me with any partiality. I had seen her but twice, and certainly a passion so sudden and violent, so strangely conceived, had more the air of romance than reality. All this I well considered, but the die was cast, I adored Clara, and I had sworn to her dying mother that I would be *her husband*.

“Poissy at length returned—‘*Miss Beaufort*,’ said he, ‘is restored to her senses; she bears the heavy blow she had long expected with the resignation of a christian; her piety and virtue have taught her fortitude in the hour of trial. Come, Count,’ added he, mildly, ‘we have no business here now, women only ought to be in the sacred apartment of death.’”

“Most reluctantly I suffered myself to be led away in silence; like a mere automaton, I submitted to his directions; my whole soul engaged in thinking of Clara. He told me that Mrs. Clement would order

der every thing that was proper, he had given her money to answer every expence; and till the funeral is over, added he, it would be very indecent for you to appear at the house; I shall call once a day on Mr. Clement to make enquiries.'

" He said not a word more relative to my vows; he told me daily the state of Clara's health; she was weak, indisposed, and afflicted, but she struggled for fortitude; and when all was over, would doubtless feel more composed. I was obliged to appear contented, and I bore the incertitude of his account as well as I could.

" At length he told me two days were passed since the funeral, and, if I pleased, he would accompany me in a visit to Miss Beaufort. My heart throbbed with impatience, he saw my emotion. 'Count,' said he, with a very serious air, 'respect the sorrows of this young lady; do not shock her by any particularity of behaviour; we must be received *only as the friends of her mother.*'

‘You may depend upon the propriety of my conduct,’ I replied; ‘have no fears for me; her grief is too sacred for any interruption on my part.’

“My heart beat, my limbs trembled, when we were introduced to the lovely mourner; she rose to receive us, but was too much agitated to speak, though she made two or three attempts. Poissy opened the conversation, by saying he had heard of a very genteel family on the banks of the Thames, five miles from town, who would be happy to receive her as a boarder: a gentleman, his wife, and two daughters, who would be cheerful companions for her.

“She raised her tearful eyes—‘Your goodness is unbounded, Sir; most readily I shall accept of it, for *here*——’ she could say no more, her emotions were too oppressive; she rose and walked to the window for a few minutes, then resumed her seat. ‘When then, Madam,’ asked I, eagerly, ‘shall we have the honour of attending you there?’ A faint blush tinged

tinged her cheek, and after a little struggle with her feelings, she replied—‘ Whatever day Monsieur Poissy shall fix after this week; I shall be at *his* command.—Pardon me, Sir, you forget the impropriety of a young woman in my situation being accompanied by a gentleman of your figure and rank.’

‘ Impropriety, Madam, when my friend is with us?’ ‘ Yes, Sir, I *must* think so; and however great are my obligations, nay, even if my inclinations coincided, yet still the duty I owe to myself, demands that I should be cautious even of a conjecture to my disadvantage; and I am sure,’ added she, in a softer voice, ‘ you would be the last man in the world, on reflection, that would give room for the breath of calumny to attack an unfortunate orphan.’

“ She burst into tears, they wounded my very soul—‘ You do me justice, Madam; I forgot in the moment any thing but my own gratification; be assured every wish of your’s is sacred to me.’

"She bowed her head; Poissy began talking of the Clements; she spoke highly of them, and he promised not to forget them.

"She appeared so low and distressed that our visit was short; in taking leave my eyes met her's; the expression in mine seemed to confuse her; she dropt her's immediately, and, in a voice hardly articulate, thanked us for our attention.

"I followed Poissy mechanically, but my heart remained with the charming Clara. I asked where he had procured a residence for her; he said, at Putney, a small village; and when settled there, added he, you shall accompany me on a visit.

"I asked how he had been able to accomplish his plan, stranger as he was—he replied, that it had occurred to him to engage Mr. Clement's aunt, who had formerly lived with the ladies, to assist him, which she had done most readily, and gave them such excellent characters, that I was much pleased with her gratitude;
and

and by her assistance and recommendation this situation at Putney was found for her. I applauded the active benevolence of my friend, though I envied him the happiness of serving her.

“On our return we found Bruyere waiting for us; he proposed to me a party into the west of England for a fortnight. I refused without hesitation; he redoubled his persuasions; at length, finding me still refractory, Poissy joined him—‘My dear Count, oblige our friend, the journey will be of infinite service to you; I will watch over your interests here, by the time you will return every thing will be settled at Putney; and till then, you know your being in town or country must be the same thing.’

“This last argument prevailed, and I made one of the party, a joyless one I am sure, for never did the time pass so heavily with me; and had they not returned at the appointed time, I should certainly have left them. I found afterwards

Bruyere had made the party at the request of Poissy, to divert my mind; nor did my friend once mention the name of Clara, and with me it was too sacred to pass my lips.

“ On our arrival I eagerly enquired for Miss Beaufort—‘ She is well, and as much composed as might be expected from good sense and resignation. To-morrow you shall see her.’ O, how tedious was this to-morrow! At length the hour came, I thought the five miles twenty; we were received by a very respectable, genteel woman—her husband was gone to London, and Miss Beaufort was in the garden with her daughters, who were engaged out for the afternoon, but could not prevail on the young lady to accompany them—‘ She is a charming girl,’ added she, ‘ and I hope time, that meliorates every affliction, will restore her health and spirits, both of which are very indifferent at present.’

“ The ladies came in; the face of Clara was covered with a faint tinge of
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vermillion when I approached her; in a low voice she enquired after my health, and expressed pleasure at seeing me. So great were my emotions that it was with difficulty I could make my compliments to her. After a short time the ladies of the family left us; she spoke very handsomely of them; to Monsieur Poissy she behaved with a respectful tenderness, to me she observed a respect bordering on reverence, that gave me a very sensible pain. My feelings broke through the reserve I had laid down as the rule of my behaviour—I asked if I had been unhappy enough to offend her, that she treated me so much like an entire stranger.

‘ Offend me, Sir,’ repeated she, with beautiful earnestness, ‘ how could such an idea find a place in your bosom; are you not my friend and benefactor? Can I think of you but with respect and gratitude? Can I behold you without reverence? Ah! Sir, do me more justice; a state of obligation, a sense of favours never to be repaid, may check my freedom

of address, but believe not that ingratitude can ever find a place in my heart.'

"I was going to speak, Poissy interrupted me—'We came here to cheer Mrs Beaufort by the sight of her true friends, and to amuse her with the little anecdotes of the town; you have been absent, you know, and therefore may be entertained also by my news.' He then related several little diverting stories, that beguiled the time till the hour came when it was proper for us to take leave. Thus passed this visit, I more enslaved than ever, but much hurt at the cold words of 'respect and reverence.'

"On our way home Poissy told me that he had been engaged in some smart debates with Miss Clara during my absence. She told me, 'That had her loved mother been spared to her, she should thankfully have accepted the deed of gift conveyed to them, but that at her time of life, with youth, talents, and she hoped soon to add health; it was an imposition upon a generous mind, and a degradation to herself
to

to become a pensioner on another's bounty. I accept with gratitude,' added she, 'your present kind attentions; I will even be obliged to the Count and you for my support here a short time, till my health is restored, and a situation, such as I wish for, may be found. But this deed, Sir, I cannot accept, 'tis a weight upon my mind that adds to my distresses; if you wish me happy, pray take it back.'

Such were the sentiments of this truly amiable girl; I combated every thing she had advanced with a friendly warmth that made her tears flow; but in vain were all my arguments or entreaties—she still persisted, 'If you really are desirous of seeing me easy and happy, you must take back this deed; while it is in my possession I am miserable.—I promise you from no human being will I receive pecuniary favours, except from the Count and you; but *I will not be a pensioner.*'

'I was with infinite reluctance,' said Poissy, 'compelled to receive the paper, which you may be sure I will retain in
trust

trust for her; but this extraordinary young woman must be obeyed, and no man in his senses could think of giving her pain by persisting in measures contrary to her wishes.'

"I was deeply affected by this instance of her spirit, and the inference he had drawn from it; I thought it boded me no good; and I was apprehensive he had given her such information relative to my family, as might induce her to decline all intercourse with me in a short time; why else talk of supporting herself by her industry and talents.

"Those reflections determined me to be perfectly explicit with my friend, and the following morning I went to his apartment, requesting he would give a patient attention to what I had to communicate. He looked serious and embarrassed—

'Speak, my dear Count, I will not interrupt you.'

"Without any evasion, I told him it was my fixed and determined resolution to marry Miss Beaufort, on whom the hap-

pinefs of my life depended. I adduced many arguments to prove my right of choofing that plan of life moft conducive to my felicity here and hereafter; I knew the opposition I muft expect, and was prepared for the confequence; I would pay my mother and grandfather the compliment of foliiciting their confent, which, if refused, would have no effect upon me.

“ My own fortune was not large, neither was it very inconfiderable; enough, I was convinced, to procure happinefs and comfort with the woman of my choice. ‘ And now,’ added I, ‘ this declaration I will make to Mifs Beaufort without delay, and write to my parents.’

“ Monsieur Poiffy heard this, and much more, without one interruption, though I faw how much he was grieved at the determined air I had affumed. When I ftopt, he paused fome moments, then embracing me moft affectionately, he faid, *my franknefs* demanded his, and he knew my juftice too well to doubt, but that, however his proceedings might militate againft my
wifhes,

wishes, I would give him credit for the truest and most disinterested regard for my happiness, and no less so for the happiness of Miss Beaufort, whom he esteemed and loved as much as if she were a child of his own.

“He then acknowledged he had fairly represented to her the views, tempers, haughty expectations, and family pride of my grandfather, and of my mother; he represented to her how unlikely it was they should ever consent to an alliance so inimical to every hope of aggrandizing their family, and where merit, however superior, would be but a secondary consideration with such as valued only riches and nobility of descent. He added, that I had an independent fortune, was master of my own actions, and could not be prevented from marrying; and were *he* the person to regulate my choice, he must confess Miss Beaufort would be the woman he should select, but unhappily his interest weighed nothing against the preponderating

ponderating scale of family pride, prejudice, and religious scruples.

“He concluded with saying, that he had performed a duty to lay every circumstance open to *her* view, as he should do to *mine*; after that, he had no right to interfere, we must determine for ourselves.

“Miss Beaufort, he said, heard him with attention and complacency. ‘You have given me, Sir,’ answered she, ‘an unequivocal proof of your friendship and esteem; I see that on you I can rely in every emergency; I shall revolve on every word you have said, examine my heart well, and at some future period, when reflection and reason give a decision to my sentiments, I hope they will be such as to merit your approbation.’

“‘From that day,’ added Monsieur Poissy, ‘not a word has been said on the subject; she has been more free and affectionate in her manners to me than before, and I believe does justice to my regard for you both.

‘Well,’ said I, after listening with the
petulant

petulant impatience of a young man, "it is unnecessary for me to make any remarks on this conversation, as I am resolved to speak without delay to Miss Beaufort; it shall be in your presence, all I exact from you is a perfect neutrality, without venturing any opinion of your own." "He readily engaged to comply with my requisitions; and I obliged him, by my importunities, to go with me the second day after the conversation I have related. She looked surprised at seeing us so soon, and I observed blushed when she cast her eyes on me; I believe the agitations of my mind were very visible.

"The moment we were alone I addressed her, without reserve, on the subject of my heart; she interrupted me with emotion--'Ah! Sir, is this a time---a subject---consider recent circumstances.' Tears dropt from her eyes: I besought her pardon---I had considered every thing, I wanted not to accelerate, nor be guilty of any impropriety, but I could not bear the torture of suspense; relieved from that, every

every thing else should be left to her own delicacy.

“ Monsieur Poissy,” I said, “ having repeated to me exactly their former conversation, it was unnecessary to say any thing of my family, or *their* views, which would have no influence over me if inimical to my happiness.” “ I then entered into a detail of the ardent passion I had conceived for her, the fortune which was in my own possession, and, with all that warmth and sincerity which glowed in my heart, I offered myself to her acceptance. I told her that when united beyond the power of man to separate us, I should implore the approbation of my friends; if they conceded, for her sake I should rejoice; but the disposition of their fortune would not affect me, for ’twas happiness, not grandeur, that I sought, and that happiness depended on an union with her.

“ In short, I said every thing that love like mine could dictate, concluding with these words---‘ You will remember, Madam, that in a most solemn moment
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a soul was wafted to heaven, her ears receiving this vow---I call Heaven to witness, I will be her friend, protector, and husband.'

" She covered her face with her handkerchief, and was for some moments incapable of speaking, a profound silence prevailed; my agitations were great; at length, endeavouring to recover, and stifling her sighs, she struggled for fortitude, and in a tremulous voice thus addressed me:

' To express my feelings by language, Sir, is impossible; the unbounded effusion of gratitude is lost in words; what I owe to you is imprinted on my heart. Ill, indeed, should I repay you, by permitting you to sacrifice all your sacred duties to a generous passion for an unfortunate young woman, who would be deservedly despised were she capable of taking an advantage of it. I will deserve your *esteem*, Sir, but I never can comply with your wishes and forfeit my own. I will not tell you transient affections are rarely permanent, I am
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convinced you really *love* me, and 'tis on that ground I am sure you will approve my sentiments.

‘ To see the object you love unhappy, to see her covered with confusion for the degradation she has occasioned, the loss of fortune that has followed her weak imprudence, and the self-reproach that must attend her to the grave for having drawn down the curses of fond respectable parents on you and your posterity—Could *you*, Sir, support the wretched humiliation of the woman you love under such circumstances? No; I know your noble heart would burst with grief and regret; and that union you so earnestly desire, would prove a source of unavailing sorrow, of undescribable wretchedness!

‘ You call to my mind the vow made in that awful crisis, that called from me every earthly blessing; well do I remember the sounds dying on my ear; but, Sir, recollect, *that vow* was conditional, to make it of effect *my* concurrence is necessary; and I have already as solemnly vowed,

never to become your wife without the entire approbation of your parents.'

" I started up, 'Madness! distraction! O Clara, what have you said, what have you done!' ' *My duty*, Sir,' said she, with emphatical earnestness; 'a duty that I owed to *you*, and to *myself*, to preserve us both from misery and a too late repentance. My vow is registered in heaven, and no temptation shall ever make me swerve from it.'

" She saw my distraction, and added in a lower tone—'Do not, Sir, be outdone in fortitude by a woman; I am not ashamed to confess the violence I have done to my own heart; and of this be assured, as I cannot be your wife, so neither will I ever give my hand to any other man breathing: a time will come when we shall feel pleasure in having sacrificed our inclinations to superior duties.'

" I was incapable of speaking; I had thrown myself across two chairs, hardly in my senses, when I was roused by Monsieur Poissy.

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‘Excellent young woman!’ cried he, ‘sentiments like your’s would dignify the most exalted station; recover yourself, my dear Count, I wonder not that you adore Miss Beaufort, she deserves the highest admiration and respect; listen to me, my dear children (ah! would to Heaven you were such, and your happiness in my hands!) I am a convert to the virtues of this charming girl, no rank can add to the lustre of her character.

‘Hear what I will undertake: I will write immediately to the Marquis and your mother; I will, if possible, do justice to Miss Beaufort; the absurd and adventitious boast of family pride, must be the principal objection; her birth is so respectable, though not noble, her education, her talents, her mind, so fitted to adorn the highest rank, that blind, cruel prejudice alone can withstand her many claims.

‘I will write all that I think; you also, my dear Count, shall give a picture of your heart; Bruyere, I am sure, will join us: let us wait the event with patience.

ence. And you, my dear Miss Beaufort, do not feel yourself degraded by this solicitation; consider, you are unknown to our friends abroad, therefore your merits are not lessened by the steps we are obliged to take.'

"I clasped him in my arms; I called him my best, my truest friend; then presuming to take her hand—'Speak, my beloved Clara, tell me, that if consent follows our applications, you will feel no reluctance to give me this dear hand?'

'Reluctance!' repeated she; tears straying from her eyes; 'the much honoured Clara will be but too happy if she is *permitted* to contribute to your felicity; but I shall not indulge *visionary* hopes, and therefore be not offended if I request you will not repeat your visits here oftener than once a week: let us not wilfully add to our regrets, or occasion unnecessary pain, if the event should terminate contrary to our wishes. Poissy joined in her opinion, and I was obliged to submit.

'Little did I think,' said he, 'that
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any inducement could have prevailed on me to be your advocate for this marriage; but the noble conduct and self-denial of that young woman, has made a convert of me.—Heaven grant our pleadings may be successful.’

“ On our return, Bruyere was informed of every circumstance, and was not less charmed with the character of Clara than ourselves; he readily accorded with my wishes, and wrote an eulogium on her—not more than she deserved, but such as few could merit; yet he had never once seen her face; but we promised he should join in our next visit.

“ The letters were sent off, but I gave myself up to despair; I knew the proud, severe, and inflexible disposition of my grandfather; and from a knowledge of my mother’s temper, I had cause to fear the same absurd ideas of rank and riches being absolutely essential to happiness, would triumph over maternal affection, and that similar sentiments would harden each other.

“ My independence now availed nothing, for Clara had vowed, and that vow she would keep irrevocably, never to be mine without their consent, and of that I had small hopes.

“ When the tedious week was expired, I earnestly besought my friend not to delay our visit; he consented to oblige me; Bruyere accompanied us: Poissy apologized for introducing him, and mentioned him as my companion when we first met on the road. ‘ I am happy, Sir,’ said she, in an opportunity of making my best thanks to you for the protection you afforded to me; and also,’ added she, with some emotion, ‘ for other favours, most opportunely and delicately presented.’

“ He made a polite return, and the conversation became general, in which I attempted now and then to join, but my whole soul was so absorbed in looking on, and listening to the charming Clara, that I appeared to very little advantage, and was, in truth, a very spiritless figure. When we took leave, it was like the pangs
of

of death seizing on my heart ; I should see her no more till the arrival of the answers to our letters, and what their contents might be I shuddered to think of.

“ Bruyere confessed he had never seen a more beautiful or interesting object, and congratulated me and himself that he had not beheld her face and known her merit earlier ; ‘ Now,’ said he, ‘ your attachment is a talisman to guard my heart ; yet I will not visit her again ; for as I know the engagements my family have made for me, and to which I readily acceded, from having no objection to the lady, I will not risk the dangerous pleasure of viewing a too lovely woman, that might lead me into invidious comparisons, and in consequence destroy my future peace.’

“ Poissy applauded his prudence and rectitude, and went into a long lecture on the folly and weakness of giving way to our passions, and the merit attached to that fortitude which nobly struggled against them, and rose superior to the disappoint-

ments generally attendant on the indulgence of our inclinations.

“ I heard him with a sigh, that too plainly declared the imbecility of my mind ; he saw, and pitied the fatal passion that, like Aaron’s rod, swallowed up every active principle of my soul ; he endeavoured to amuse me, and strengthen every virtue he had inculcated, that I might be prepared for the event so anxiously expected.

“ At length those eagerly-desired letters came : my heart sickened, I could not open mine ; Monsieur, not without some emotion, prepared to look into his ; I watched the movement of his eye, as I held my own letter unopened—in a moment I saw it animated ; before I could speak, he cried—‘ My dear Count, we have conquered ! a condition, indeed, is annexed to the consent of your friends, but you have too many obligations to them to object any thing to their wishes.’

“ I was hardly sensible of his words, I
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tore open my own letter, it was from my mother; she accorded a very reluctant consent, *if I was determined*; but entered into a long string of arguments, I did not then attend to, to prove that I was deficient in pride, sentiment, and that spirit which ought to be attached to nobleness of birth, if I persisted in following my present inclinations, and married a woman without rank or riches, to both of which I was so well entitled, and might doubtless meet, joined to all the fancied charms and virtues I gave to the object of my improper passion; but if, after all that was due to them and to myself, I persisted in my intention, they would not withhold their consent, though they could not give their approbation; and, as the last proof of the obedience due to them, they insisted that I should not complete my marriage in England, but that the young lady should put herself under the care of Monsieur Poissy, and that we should with all speed return to my grandfather's, where the marriage might be celebrated in the

presence of my family—*this*, she added, was at least a mark of respect they had a right to command, when they gave up their *wishes* to mine.

“ My grandfather’s letter to Monsieur was much to the same purport, urging him by every argument he could deduce to combat my passion ; but if he found it irresistible, then to take Miss Beaufort under his protection, and hasten to France.

“ My transports at this little-expected concession were ungovernable ; I obliged Poissy to go with me immediately to Putney. When Clara appeared, I threw myself at her feet, seized her hand, but could not speak ; she trembled excessively at my agitations, and compelled me to rise, while Monsieur read to her the letters, without omitting a single word, which I did not thank him for. ‘ Now, my beloved Miss Beaufort, I come to claim your promise—now you will be mine by the consent of my friends.’

“ Tears gushed from her eyes, seeing me alarmed, she said, ‘ Be not offended
with

with me, my dear Count, but judge of the influence you hold over me when I yield to love, gratitude, and my own heart; and that, in opposition to reason, pride, and delicacy, when I consent to appear before your friends, a humble, obliged, and presumptuous girl, stepping out of the path that was chalked for her by birth and inclination, and submit to bear the repulsive eye of scorn, or, at best, the frigid look of indifference and displeasure, as the object who has counteracted all their views for your splendid establishment in life."

"I interrupted her, I know not what I said, for my heart was in tumults—I praised, blamed, reproached, and adored her. 'I deserve not your reproaches,' said she, mildly, 'I gave my word, and I abide by it; I own I did not expect even this hard-wrung, reluctant consent, but I owe *you* every thing, and henceforth Monsieur Poissy and you shall direct my conduct.—Heaven grant you may never repent.

repent your generous affection, and the choice you have made !'

" Every thing expressive of my love and gratitude, you may be sure, I said ; and having no longer any wish to continue in England, I was eager with them to fix a time for our departure. Clara made some objections of a delicate nature, but those were over-ruled by my friend ; and it was agreed upon that we should write the following day, and set out early in the next week for France.

" Never was joy more fervent than mine ; to be united to that angelic girl was to me the sum of all earthly bliss.

" My friend Bruyere, who had received letters from his friends, requesting his return to fulfil his matrimonial engagement, readily agreed to be of our party ; and nothing happened to impede us from setting off on the appointed day. Clara was drowned in tears when I called for her ; ' Ah !' said she, drying them with her handkerchief, and giving me her hand—

' Ah !

' Ah! my dear Count, I now quit England for ever, the spot ever dear to me, for it holds the ashes of my beloved parents!—May they, like guardian angels, watch over the destiny of their child; and grant Heaven that I may ever deserve and retain *your* affection, on which alone hangs the happiness of my life.'

"I endeavoured to calm and soothe her too tender feelings, but a heavy dejection hung on her spirits, and when we took a last look of the white cliffs of Albion, she clasped her hands in an agony, and fainted away. I was extremely shocked at her distress; alas! it was a just presentiment, a sad foreboding of the evils that were ready to burst over our heads!

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

12

"And my dear Count, I now quit England for ever, the spot ever dear to me for it holds the ashes of my beloved parent—May they, like guardian angels, watch over the destiny of their child; and grant Heaven that I may ever believe and retain your affection, on which alone hangs the happiness of my life."

"I endeavoured to calm and soothe her too tender feelings, but a heavy dejection hung on her spirits, and when we took a last look of the white cliffs of Albion, she clasped her hands in an agony, and flung away. I was extremely shocked at her distress; alas! it was a just premonition, a bad foreboding of the evils that were ready to burst over our heads!"



END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.